UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
34th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 10 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice Chairman)	(Philippines)
later:	Mr. BALZAN (Rapporteur)	(Malta)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.34
1 December 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

92-57627 6395S (E)

In the absence of Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay), Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (A/47/3, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/83, A/47/132, A/47/212-E/1992/54, A/47/222-E/1992/57 and Corr.1, A/47/225-S/23998, A/47/267, A/47/278-E/1992/77, A/47/283-E/1992/83, A/47/289-E/1992/68, A/47/294-E/1992/84, A/47/338, A/47/375-S/24429, A/47/403, A/47/407, A/47/408, A/47/411, A/47/445, A/47/446, A/47/499, A/47/627; A/C.2/47/L.2, A/C.2/47/L.5)

1. Mr. JI CHAOZHU (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development) introduced the report of the Economic and Social Council for 1992 (A/47/3), published at a time of heightened expectations regarding the role played by the United Nations in the field of international economic cooperation and development. The first high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, held in July 1992 on the theme "Enhancing international cooperation for development: the role of the United Nations system", had been widely regarded as a success, and constituted a positive step forward in the functioning of the Council. Care would have to be taken, however, to ensure equitable geographical representation at the senior official level in order to continue to attract high-level participation and obtain significant results. It might be advisable to limit the debate to a single theme and to encourage spontaneous discussion, with formal statements being held to a minimum. The one-day policy dialogue with the executive heads of the multilateral financial and trade organizations was a formula that should be retained. The executive heads of the World Bank, IMF, GATT and UNCTAD should automatically be associated with the Council's deliberations and with policy formulation. During the coordination segment, a constructive dialogue had been generated between Member States and representatives of the specialized agencies and financial institutions on the eradication of poverty and the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS (reports of the Secretary-General in documents E/1992/47 and E/1992/67), thus reinforcing the need for that type of exchange of views. The members of the Council's Bureau regretted, however, that the debate had ended with a concluding statement by the President rather than with the adoption of a formal decision which would have engaged the entire membership of the Council and would have been transmitted to the General Assembly, and subsequently to the organizations of the United Nations system, for follow-up action. The coordination segment should be carefully prepared. The themes should be chosen sufficiently far in advance to leave time for gathering data, carrying out system-wide consultations and preparing comprehensive reports.

2. At its substantive session in July 1992, the Economic and Social Council had adopted 60 resolutions, including resolution 1992/27, co-sponsored by a record number of delegations, concerning the convening of a world summit for social development, one of the issues taken up at the high-level segment of the Council. The World Summit for Social Development, which the Government of Denmark had offered to host in Copenhagen, was designed to put people and

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

social issues at the centre of development cooperation and to provide a common framework for United Nations action in that area. Three core themes seemed to be emerging: the reduction of poverty, the promotion of productive employment, and social cohesion. The Council had also adopted a resolution on activities of transnational corporations in South Africa (resolution 1992/34), calling for a cautiously optimistic approach to the evolving situation in that country. On the subject of the International Conference on Population and Development (resolution 1992/37) it should be noted that preparatory work was well under way. Lastly, the Council had endorsed the updated global strategy of the World Health Organization for the prevention and control of AIDS (resolution 1992/33).

3. In the context of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, it was to be hoped that the ideas and suggestions put forward by the Secretary-General in his report on the item (A/47/534) would be useful to the General Assembly in its consideration of agenda item 47. It was also to be hoped that, given the dire situation of the world economy, Member States would succeed in demonstrating political will and adopting a collective approach to stimulating world economic growth. The prospect had been clouded by the delay in concluding the Uruguay Round. The intervention of political leaders at the highest level would be needed to reconcile the positions of the European Community and the United States of America.

4. Mrs. SADIK (Secretary-General of the International Conference on Population and Development) said that the Second Committee's programme of work covered many of the most pressing, freqently interrelated challenges, facing humanity. Although some countries had succeeded in enhancing the quality of life of their citizens, 1.2 billion people continued to live in absolute poverty. Rapid population growth was straining available resources - food, fresh water, health services and educational opportunities - accelerating pollution, the generation of waste and rapid urbanization, and propelling uncontrolled migration. It was encouraging, however, that, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the international community had demonstrated its determination to act. Just as the Rio Conference had sought to integrate environmental concerns and economic activities, the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994, would be an occasion for studying the links between population and sustainable development. The Conference had been given a mandate to adopt a set of recommendations to guide the technical and operational aspects of population policies and programmes, and to provide input for the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

5. Four of the six expert groups convened as part of the preparations for the Conference had already met (E/1992/60), and the remaining two should meet shortly. Their reports and recommendations were being published as they became available. In addition, five regional conferences on population, jointly organized by the regional economic commissions and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), had taken place or were about to do so (E/1992/60).

(Mrs. Sadik)

They would provide an opportunity for political dialogue and for articulating regional perspectives. Lastly, several ad hoc consultations were envisaged, in cooperation with Governments, foundations and non-governmental organizations. The consultations might cover the following questions: population and development planning, women's perspectives on family planning, reproductive health and reproductive rights, moral issues in the population and development debate, lessons to be drawn from the Rio Conference, and the demographic impact of HIV/AIDS. In addition, UNFPA had organized a consultative meeting on the relationships between economic growth and population.

6. Governments, for their part, had been invited to set up national committees representing all organizations and entities concerned and responsible for coordinating the preparation of national reports on population reviewing the demographic and development situation in each ocuntry; a comprehensive analysis of those reports would be submitted to the Conference on Population. The response from countries had been extremely encouraging. It should be noted that the Conference was arousing increasing interest throughout the world. The non-aligned countries, at their Tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government, the Group of 77, at its sixteenth annual meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, and the Group of Fifteen had expressed their support for and interest in the questions to be addressed. The Government of Egypt, which had offered to host the Conference, was working in close cooperation with the Conference secretariat. Two further meetings of the Preparatory Committee were scheduled, and it would be helpful if delegations would give their views on the dates of the two meetings. The success of preparations for the Cairo Conference depended heavily on active intergovernmental consultations and political negotiations. It was important that parliamentarians, women's groups, intergovernmental organizations and the private sector should be involved as widely as possible in the expert group meetings and regional conferences. Non-governmental organizations from developing countries should take part in the preparatory process, with the help, inter alia, of financial support that might be provided by bilateral donors and foundations. There was also a need to ensure gender balance on the national committees and delegations. Several countries had made or pledged contributions to the special trust funds for the Conference. It was hoped that other countries, both developed and developing, would come forth with contributions for the Conference and its preparatory process.

7. Mr. JOSEPH (World Health Organization) introduced the report by the Director-General of WHO on the implementation of the global strategy for the prevention and control of AIDS (A/47/289), prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 46/203. The report was based on the report submitted by the Director-General of WHO to the Forty-fifth World Health Assembly and on the statements of activities submitted by the organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, members of the Inter-Agency Advisory Group on AIDS.

(Mr. Joseph, WHO)

8. As at 15 April 1992, WHO estimated that 6 to 7 million men and 4 to 5 million women in the world had been infected with HIV. By the year 2000, a total of 30 to 40 million men, women and children would have been infected with HIV since the start of the pandemic.

9. The global strategy for the prevention and control of AIDS, updated to take into account the changing nature of the pandemic and the knowledge gained in the previous five years, had been endorsed by the Forty-fifth World Health Assembly in May 1992 and by the Economic and Social Council in July 1992. Endorsement of the updated global strategy by the General Assembly would be welcome. One of the main objectives had been to mobilize and unify national and international efforts against AIDS. It was increasingly important to coordinate preventive action, and a report on that subject had been submitted to the Economic and Social Council in July 1992 during the coordination segment (E/1992/67).

10. For the fifth consecutive year, World AIDS Day would be observed around the world on 1 December. The theme of the Day for the current year, "AIDS: a community commitment", highlighted the need for local communities and the world community to join forces in the fight against AIDS. Political commitment was vital in the fight against complacency towards the problem of AIDS, and it should be noted in that connection that the Government of Nigeria, in collaboration with WHO, had succeeded in placing AIDS on the agenda of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity which had taken place in Senegal in June 1992, and at which a declaration and a programme of action for the OAU countries had been adopted. It was important for all Governments to encourage such consciousness-raising efforts, but the fight against AIDS could only be won through an accurate assessment of local circumstances and dialogue with those directly concerned.

11. Mr. KHALIQ-UZ-ZAMAN (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that with the increasing globalization of issues and the growing interdependence of nations, the United Nations had a central role to play in international economic relations. The goals could best be achieved by strengthening the role of the General Assembly and further revitalizing the Economic and Social Council.

12. In resolution 45/264, the General Assembly had decided to revitalize the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, in particular by strengthening the Economic and Social Council. In 1992, the Council's substantive session had taken place in the revised format for the first time, in accordance with resolution 45/264. The high-level segment on the theme "Enhancing international economic cooperation for development: the role of the United Nations system" had generated lively debate and demonstrated the central role which the United Nations could play in global macroeconomic policy formulation. The active participation of the heads of specialized agencies and multilateral financial and trade institutions had also been an important element in the debate. Another highly positive development had been the decision to set up an ad hoc working group of the Council for the purpose

(Mr. Khaliq-Uz-Zaman, Pakistan)

of holding consultations on enhancing the role of the United Nations system in the promotion of international cooperation for development.

13. However, the Group of 77 believed that there was a further need to revitalize the United Nations in the economic and social fields and, especially, to strengthen the role of the Council by adopting the following measures, already proposed by the Group. Firstly, the high-level segment should consider, on a regular basis, the question of macroeconomic coordination at the global level. The executive heads of the competent organizations, institutions and agencies should take part in the debate and submit periodic reports on the implementation of the decisions taken on the subject. Furthermore, during the coordination segment, the heads of the institutions and agencies concerned should submit reports on the implementation of recommendations made during previous Council meetings. The Committee segment of the Economic and Social Council could be abolished, but the Council should continue to hold plenary meetings to supervise the activities of the subsidiary organs. The membership of the Council need not be considered for the time being. That also applied to proposals concerning subsidiary mechanisms, emergency sessions and so on.

14. The Group of 77 had also suggested that the operational activities segment should be aimed specifically at providing overall policy guidance for all United Nations operational activities until the following triennial policy review, following up General Assembly recommendations and decisions regarding operational activities, coordinating operational activities for development on a system-wide basis, monitoring the division of labour among the funds and programmes, and evaluating the reports on the work of the funds and programmes, including their overall impact. The Group of 77 was carefully examining the recommendations submitted by other groups and countries, and would endeavour to contribute to the success of the important negotiations currently being pursued within the framework of the ad hoc group recently constituted by the President of the General Assembly.

15. The Group of 77 had taken note of the report of the Secretary-General on the impact of the evolution of East-West relations on global growth and development (A/47/403), which confirmed some of the fears expressed by the developing countries. It was now likely that the East would need international assistance over a longer period of time and on a much larger scale than originally anticipated, which could harm the interests of developing countries. It was the firm view of the Group of 77 that assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and the countries of Eastern Europe should be provided from additional resources, without in any way eroding the international community's commitment to assist the development process in the developing countries. For that reason, as the Secretary-General had pointed out, it was important to restore the multilateral trading system and improve it continuously, inter alia by bringing the Uruguay Round to a successful conclusion at the earliest opportunity.

(Mr. Khaliq-Uz-Zaman, Pakistan)

16. The Group of 77 appreciated the Egyptian Government's offer to host the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, to which it attached great importance. It was essential that the preparatory process should focus on the linkage between development and population, that the entire intergovernmental machinery should become involved in that process and that the two sessions of the Preparatory Committee should be structured in a manner that would ensure a rational organization of work.

17. Mr. CLARK (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the new structure of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, agreed in General Assembly resolution 45/264 and employed for the first time in 1992, represented a significant improvement. The discussion on enhancing international cooperation for development was of a much higher quality than most Council debates in recent years. He hoped that participation would be at a similarly high level in future years and that the segment would attract increasing numbers of ministers from both developed and developing countries. The decision to set up an ad hoc working group to follow up the high-level segment was also encouraging. It was important to ensure that topics of high priority to Member States were chosen for discussion in future years.

18. The coordination segment had also been marked by genuine dialogue. The exchange of views on the coordination of United Nations efforts to combat poverty and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) served to highlight the diversity of measures being taken and to underline the necessity of not wasting resources on duplicative programmes. Statements by representatives of United Nations organizations should be circulated in advance and should specifically address issues of coordination. In addition, adequate time should be provided for a free exchange of views. Finally, the debate should result in conclusions agreed by Member States, rather than a statement by the President; on that basis, the various governing bodies could make appropriate adjustments to their work programmes and medium-term plans.

19. The operational activities segment had included some useful dialogue with the agencies, but had had little practical impact. The Council should be able to provide overall policy guidance to United Nations agencies and funds with a view to enhancing the governance and thrust of the Organization's development activities.

20. The 1991 reform did not address the question of the Council's agenda. Currently, the agenda of the Economic Committee, for example, largely duplicated that of the Second Committee of the General Assembly. The issues dealt with by the Council's Economic Committee should therefore be considered in the coordination and operational activities segments. Similarly, the work of the Social Committee should be transformed into a social segment of sufficient length to ensure proper discussion of all the items currently dealt with by that Committee. The Council would thus be organized on the basis of working segments, with a high-level meeting to discuss policy issues and

(Mr. Clark, United Kingdom)

provide guidance to the United Nations system. Major economic and social policy themes would continue to be discussed in the high-level segment.

21. Most documentation arrived too late to provide adequate time for preparation. While Member States should avoid requesting duplicative reports, the Secretariat should take the steps required to produce documents on time. In particular, short reports of high quality would reduce the burden on translation services and on delegations.

22. Having already set out its views on the substantive issues considered by the Council at its session, the European Community and its member States would refrain from repeating them and would merely reiterate the importance they attached to the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held at Cairo in 1994.

23. Mr. SHREIM (Observer for Palestine), commenting on the reports of the Secretary-General on the economic and social consequences of the establishment of settlements by Israel in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan (A/47/294-E/1992/84) and on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/47/212-E/1992/54), stated that any real development of Palestinian territory was impossible, as the occupation authorities were confiscating and annexing land with the aim of destroying the Palestinian economic infrastructure, expelling Palestinians and replacing them with Jewish immigrants.

24. Given that the General Assembly had recognized in the Declaration on the right to development (resolution 41/128, annex) that the right was an inalienable human right which also implied the full realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, the right of Palestinians to development should be addressed within the wider context of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as defined in various resolutions. The United Nations had also emphasized the principle of the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people over its national resources. The Palestinians were convinced that the United Nations could play a larger role in providing economic protection to their people.

25. The Palestinian economy continued to suffer as a result of Israeli practices, particularly since the beginning of the intifadah in 1987 and in the aftermath of the Gulf War. As the Secretary-General's report showed, one of the most dangerous practices was the ongoing construction and enlargement of Israeli settlements.

26. Security Council resolution 465 (1980) stressed that the policy of establishing Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, had no legal validity and constituted a major obstacle to the realization of a just peace in the region. Many other General Assembly and Security Council resolutions reaffirmed that position. In addition, the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which was applicable to all occupied territories, including Jerusalem, prohibited the occupying Power from

(Mr. Shreim, Observer, Palestine)

establishing settlements (art. 49, sixth para.). Security Council resolutions remained binding and should be implemented, but according to statistics from the United States Department of State, there were some 250 settlements, comprising 254,000 inhabitants, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

27. That illegal policy aimed to deprive the Palestinian people of their national resources. For example, water resources were subjected to excessive exploitation by Israel. According to a UNDP study, 80 per cent of the water resources in the occupied Palestinian territory were being used to supply Israeli needs, and represented 30 per cent of Israeli water consumption.

28. Israel's land confiscation policy had also escalated in the past few years. More than 65 per cent of the land in the West Bank and over 45 per cent of the land in the Gaza Strip had been confiscated. In addition, a great number of trees, mostly fruit-bearing, had been uprooted (128,364 trees between the beginning of the intifadah and June 1992).

29. Despite several limited gestures in the wake of the election, the Israeli authorities had failed to take the steps necessary to bring about real change in the living conditions of Palestinians. In addition, while having announced a freeze on what they called political settlements, they continued to establish settlements, mainly in the Jordan valley and a vast area around East Jerusalem, amounting to more than 50 per cent of the land mass of the West Bank.

30. With reference to the Secretary-General's report on assistance to the Palestinian people, Palestine thanked all countries, United Nations bodies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that had contributed to efforts to assist the Palestinian people. However, in view of the increasing difficulties the Palestinian people faced because of Israeli policies, the amount of assistance they received should be immediately increased. It would be useful if the Secretary-General's report on the subject the following year included some evaluation of current projects and the obstacles encountered, as well as any recommendations.

31. Palestine differentiated between two kinds of assistance: humanitarian and development assistance. In its view, humanitarian aid should be provided by the occupying Power, Israel, and should essentially be channelled through UNRWA, and to a lesser extent, through UNICEF and UNFPA. Much more attention should be given to development assistance. Further, the Palestinian economy needed grants and loans, which should be targeted to stimulate local resources and not to replace them. It would also be desirable for the United Nations to play a bigger role in the future in coordinating assistance to the Palestinian people, in close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

32. A whole year had elapsed since the start of the Madrid peace process. Although the Palestinians firmly believed that the multilateral talks were promising for all parties, on all levels, they also believed that the

(Mr. Shreim, Observer, Palestine)

negotiations could not progress while the bilateral talks continued to falter, and if there was to be progress in the bilateral talks, Israel must agree to comply with international legality.

33. At its most recent session, the Economic and Social Council had adopted by an overwhelming majority two resolutions concerning the question of Palestine - the first on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli settlements on the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and on the Arab population of the Syrian Golan, and the second on assistance to the Palestinian people. By voting in favour of those resolutions in the Second Committee, the international community would be both sending a clear message regarding Israeli settlement policies and reaffirming its commitment to supporting the Palestinian people by all possible means. But, given the opposition of some countries, it now appeared that the resolutions would not be unanimously adopted. Palestine appealed to all Member States to adopt them by the largest possible majority.

34. Mrs. HASSAN (Egypt) said that the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July 1992 had been characterized by important initiatives, which Egypt hoped would be pursued at future sessions. First of all, steps had been taken to make the Council's deliberations more productive and less formal. During the high-level segment of the Council, a broad convergence of views had emerged on the pivotal role that the United Nations system should play at the present juncture, which provided a unique opportunity for strengthening international development cooperation. A solid consensus had been established on the inextricable linkages between international development cooperation for the eradication of poverty and the maintenance of peace and security, and on the idea that the development of developing countries should be pursued with the same vigour as the maintenance of peace and security. A thought-provoking dialogue had taken place on a vision of development as human-centred and the need to integrate social goals, in particular the advancement of women and the protection of vulnerable groups. That dialogue had also stressed the importance of interaction between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

35. The Council having accepted Egypt's offer, in September 1994 the Egyptian Government would host the International Conference on Population and Development, the first on that subject to be held in Africa, which had the world's highest population growth rate. Geographically and politically, Egypt was a crossroads, and had long been aware of the seriousness of population issues and the need to tackle them at social and economic levels. Egypt had recently made remarkable progress in that respect: the population growth rate had started to come down owing to a policy which had a twin thrust: transformation of the population into a productive force through education and training, and control of population increase through family planning. The theme of the Conference on Population and Development would be the linkages between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, linkages which had already been spelled out at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; the Conference on Population and Development

(Mrs. Hassan, Egypt)

would have to build on the results obtained at the Conference on Environment and Development. In preparation for the 1994 Conference regional meetings were planned, which were being organized by the regional economic commissions and UNFPA, to which her delegation paid tribute. Such regional conferences would introduce regional perspectives; five of the six expert group meetings mandated by the Economic and Social Council (decision 1991/93) would take place before the end of 1992. In view of the magnitude of the decisions to be made, the duration and timing of the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee needed to be adjusted. The success of the Conference would depend not only on the quality of the preparatory work, but also on an increased level of public awareness of population issues and their links with development. Her delegation thanked the countries which had contributed to the Trust Fund for the Conference.

36. Egypt believed that technical cooperation among developing countries should be applied in all stages of the project cycle and facilitated by all organizations in the United Nations system.

37. At the initiative of Norway, Egypt and Italy, a ministerial workshop on energy had been held at Solstrand (Norway) in July 1992. The meeting had focused on the crucial links between energy, environment and development. The joint memorandum issued at the end of the workshop appeared in document A/47/390.

38. Her delegation shared the concern expressed earlier on the continuing rise in the number of rural women in poverty and considered that the international community had a responsibility for improving the condition of rural women. Her delegation supported the Geneva Declaration issued by the summit on the economic advancement of rural women.

39. The renewal of meetings of ESCWA, the sixteenth session of which had been held in Amman in September 1992, was a cause for satisfaction.

40. With regard to the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council, she said that the General Assembly had made significant progress towards reforming the United Nations in the economic and social fields, but any reform should aim at making the United Nations more effective in promoting international cooperation for the development of the developing countries. Her delegation supported the position of the Group of 77 on that question.

41. Mr. Balzan (Malta), Rapporteur, took the Chair.

42. Mr. AMMARIN (Jordan) said that although international law explicitly prohibited an occupying Power from settling its population in territories it occupied, the Israeli Government had continued to settle Israeli colonists on Arab lands on the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan. He drew attention to Security Council resolutions 446 (1979) and 465 (1980) on that subject. The continuous increase in the construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was having a tremendous effect on the

(Mr. Ammarin, Jordan)

socio-economic structure of the Palestinian people; the situation was very alarming. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/294), which dealt, among other things, with the problem of water resources in the occupied territories, agricultural production had been affected and the income of the Palestinians had dropped steadily. While the Israeli settlers could export and import freely, Palestinians had to go through Israeli middlemen. To make room for more settlements, Israel was confiscating land and water resources belonging to the Palestinians. Yet agriculture continued to be the backbone of their economy. Moreover, the Israeli settlers constituted an armed militia often committing acts of violence against unarmed Palestinian civilians. The condition of the Palestinians in the occupied territories could not remain as it was if a just and lasting peace in the Middle East was really being sought. As the Palestinian population was increasing by about 3 per cent a year, settling Israeli immigrants in the West Bank and Gaza, which were already heavily populated, would cause severe strain on land and water resources and would doom future generations of Palestinian Arabs to poverty while threatening the land with tragic environmental damage. Although the cold-war era had ended, the question of how long Israel could continue its occupation and its practices remained.

43. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, resumed the Chair.

44. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria), referring to the question of aid to the Palestinian people, said that, in spite of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Israeli occupying authorities were continuing their total dispossession of the Palestinian and Arab population of the occupied territories in defiance of international conventions. Employing a judicial and administrative arsenal which was unjust and discriminatory with respect to the Palestinians and Arabs, they had undertaken the large-scale colonization of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Syrian Golan and East Jerusalem. Launched in 1967, that movement had been intensified with the massive immigration to Israel of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe. Those deliberate practices amounted to a denial of justice which had disastrous economic and social consequences for the Palestinian and Arab population. Large amounts of Arab land were confiscated regularly and, with the help of subsidies and other benefits, the settler colonies were growing and increasing in number while the Arab and Palestinian towns and villages were subjected to military restrictions and condemned to isolation. Moreover, the restrictions relating to water resources and the uprooting of fruit trees led to a decline in agricultural production and income and a steep rise in unemployment. Many of the local inhabitants were thus gradually forced to abandon their homes.

45. In spite of the traditional political divisions, it had recently been possible to begin a dynamic for peace which made possible the hope of a general, just and lasting settlement of the conflict which would take into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian and Arab people of the occupied territories. The international community and the States with recognized influence must now do everything in their power to induce the Israeli authorities to comply scrupulously with the resolutions of the

(Mr. Laouari, Algeria)

Security Council and the General Assembly and put a definitive end to a policy and practices which were unanimously condemned. The international community should redouble its efforts to increase its aid and intensify the programme of economic and social assistance. He reaffirmed Algeria's solidarity with the Palestinian and Arab populations of the occupied territories in their struggle against injustice and oppression and to exercise their inalienable rights.

46. Referring to the international conference on population and development, he said that in many regions of the world large parts of the population continued to live in extremely precarious conditions and the continuing deterioration of the economic situation in many countries, combined with the rapid growth of their population, threatened to aggravate still further an already critical situation. The various plans of action and strategies adopted had highlighted the link between the questions of population, development and environment and the need for an integrated approach. The international community and the developed countries should undertake energetic global action without delay to sustain the development of the developing economies, and the 1994 Conference on Population and Development would no doubt facilitate such action. The Conference should be prepared as carefully as possible. In that context, the meetings of experts and the activities conducted on the regional and national levels took on special importance. The developing countries should be given appropriate technical and financial assistance to prepare for the Conference. His delegation welcomed the extrabudgetary contributions made by some Governments and hoped that that example would be followed quickly by others. It congratulated UNFPA and the Secretary-General of the Conference.

47. The efforts of the Central and Eastern European countries to integrate themselves into the world economy had given rise to a sense of solidarity rarely equalled in the annals of contemporary international relations, while North-South cooperation reflected the deadlock in which his country currently found itself. At the same time, the reforms undertaken by many developing countries, particularly in Africa, were being hindered by the combined effects of an unfavourable economic climate, drying up of foreign sources of financing and the net transfer of financial resources from developing to the developed countries. If not remedied soon, that situation could give rise to a new form of North-South confrontation, bringing with it serious dangers. It was essential to ensure that, at the very least, the movement of capital into the Central and Eastern European countries did not place the developing countries at a disadvantage.

48. Mr. FRIIS (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the report of the Economic and Social Council had been circulated so late that delegations had barely had time to study it.

49. The Secretary-General's report on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social and related fields (A/47/534) contained many valuable observations and proposals and provided a good starting-point for further discussions on reform of the Economic and Social

(Mr. Friis, Denmark)

Council. In 1992, the Council had for the first time held a single substantive session and the high-level debate had proved worthwhile. However, in order to ensure continuation of that constructive debate, it might be useful in the future to focus on a single theme. Formal statements should also be limited to leave more time for genuine dialogue.

50. The debate on coordination issues had demonstrated that donor and recipient countries alike agreed that the United Nations system should use its limited resources responsibly, avoid duplication and strengthen inter-agency cooperation.

51. While there had been progress in the revitalization and restructuring of the Economic and Social Council, much remained to be done. Repetitive and often futile debates in subsidiary bodies of the Council, the Council itself and the General Assembly highlighted the need for better allocation of agenda items, in particular between the Council and the Second and Third Committees. The General Assembly needed to coordinate the work of the Second and Third Committees and, similarly, the Economic and Social Council should take an integrated approach to economic and social questions, which would best be considered in the context of the coordination segment. It was also important to improve the governing mechanisms in the economic and social fields. The special ad hoc working group set up for that purpose by the General Assembly was considering, among other items, the questions of an international development council and smaller executive bodies for funds and programmes.

52. It was encouraging that reforms had also been undertaken in other United Nations forums such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which had embarked on a process of revitalization at its eighth session, held in Cartagena. Measures were currently being taken to give concrete form to the consensus which had emerged on the need to reform the Conference's structure and working methods, and it was important for all members to make the necessary efforts to complete the revitalization process. Steps had already been taken to integrate the concept of sustainable development into the work of UNCTAD. The Nordic countries were confident that dialogue and in-depth analysis would benefit both the international environment and the trade and development of the developing countries.

53. The industrialized countries must make every effort to provide the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, with greater access to international markets. That included removing tariff and non-tariff barriers and improving the generalized system of preferences. In that connection, it was regrettable that the Uruguay Round negotiations had not been completed.

54. The AIDS pandemic was far from under control, and higher priority must be given to prevention of the disease; the Nordic countries appreciated the United Nations system's efforts in that area. In view of the gravity and socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, a decisive multisectoral effort was in order, with each party concentrating on the area in which it was most

(Mr. Friis, Denmark)

competent. The Nordic countries fully supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/33 on that issue and looked forward to the report which the Director-General of WHO would submit to the Council in 1993.

55. The World Food Council was as relevant today as when it had been set up in 1974, even though it had not been able to meet the expectations of its founders. There was, however, an increasing need for an international forum for discussion of global food policy issues. Such issues should be included among the key development issues coordinated by the Economic and Social Council and should also be addressed by an agency responsible for norm-setting activities, data dissemination and operational activities in the field.

56. Understanding of population issues had increased greatly during the past decade. Most Governments had realized the importance of making an active population policy part of their national development plans. The task was no longer to convince Governments but to assist them. A greater awareness of population issues must be created in industrialized countries as well as in developing countries. Population activities should be made an integral part of assistance in a wide range of areas - advancement of the status of women, education, primary health care and literacy promotion.

57. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had underscored the connections between population, environment and development. The Nordic countries believed that even more attention should be paid to those relationships. It therefore welcomed the decision to hold an International Conference on Population and Development in 1994. The very title of the conference emphasized that population policies were important and, in some countries, crucial to balanced and sustainable development.

58. Mr. PASZYNSKI (Poland), commenting on the Secretary-General's report on the impact of the evolution of East-West relations on global growth and development (A/47/403), said that, regrettably, the report, the first on that topic, dealt with only one aspect of the transition process in Central and Eastern Europe, highlighting the potentially negative elements and overlooking the dynamic effects of that transformation. In addition, some of the predictions did not seem to be very well documented.

59. The risks of a diversion of resource flows to Central and Eastern European countries were dwelt on at great length, while in his report on net transfer of resources between developing and developed countries (A/47/404), the Secretary-General stressed that in 1990-1991 the net transfer of financial resources to the developing countries had been positive for the first time in many years. In any case, the growth of resource inflows to those countries could not keep pace with the increase of transfers of resources from the western to the eastern part of Germany, or with the drain on world savings resulting from the budget deficits of certain protagonists on the world economic stage. It also seemed false to assert that the increase in demand for capital in Central and Eastern Europe exerted upward pressure on world interest rates, for those interest rates were determined primarily by internal

(Mr. Paszynski, Poland)

conditions, by the decline in savings rates, by the domestic policy considerations of the major economic Powers, or by imbalances in the world economy.

60. The negative impact of the contraction in demand for imported products, especially from developing countries, in Eastern and Central European countries, also appeared to be exaggerated. Table 3 clearly showed that the countries that had progressed furthest in transforming their economies - Hungary, Czechoslovakia and especially Poland - had expanded their imports from the majority of developing countries in 1990-1991, reflecting both the liberalization of trade and the growth in demand for consumer goods. That table also showed that the more outward-oriented and market-based developing countries were better placed to avail themselves of the opportunities created by the transition in Eastern and Central European countries. Emphasis was now placed on the downward trend in trade with those few developing countries that had been full members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) or that had had cooperant status, whereas in the past the socialist countries had been criticized for restricting their trade with developing countries to precisely those countries.

61. The phenomenon of transition, which was of crucial significance to the international community, must not be considered from the narrow perspective of East-West trade and its impact on the world economy. Above all, that transition "had resulted in a one-world economy" (A/47/397, para. 91). Furthermore, the concepts of East and West now seemed outdated and without relevance to the contemporary world. In the modern-day interdependent world, the advantage of one group of countries in international economic relations should not be regarded as necessarily prejudicial to the interests of other groups of countries. Such reasoning was absolutely unjustified, given the close interlinkage between world economic processes. It would seem that subjecting the countries in transition to stricter economic discipline under stabilization and adjustment programmes would be beneficial to the world economy as a whole. Moreover, lending on a net basis to the economies in transition by the International Monetary Fund had turned positive for the first time since 1985 (A/47/270, para. 64).

62. Furthermore, transition brought many intangible benefits. In creating a one-world economy, it had discredited the alternative to market-based development. The collapse of the fallacious economic theories of communism had undoubtedly helped shift economic thinking in developing countries, underscoring the world-wide relevance of the transition process. At the same time, it had contributed to eliminating the split between the two elements of international economic cooperation, which had been governed by entirely dissimilar sets of rules.

63. The gradual integration of the economies in transition into the world economy was beneficial to all. It allowed for more efficient resource allocation at world scale and for a better international division of labour. As was noted by the Secretary-General in his report (A/47/397, para. 77), the

(Mr. Paszynski, Poland)

opening up of the countries in transition would entail a remaking of the regional organizations, notably on the European continent, partly because of the disappearance of CMEA. That being the case, one was bound to wonder whether it was not an oversimplification to say that that integration amounted to discrimination against other countries.

64. The transformations taking place in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were a matter of the utmost importance to the community of nations. The United Nations should not disregard that development, but should analyse the process of transition in its dynamic context.

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

65. Mr. ALIOU (Cameroon), introducing draft decision A/C.2/47/L.19 on behalf of the sponsors, said that at the previous session, in its resolution 46/171, the General Assembly had invited all States and competent United Nations organizations and programmes which had participated actively in the conference of friends of Chad to participate in the different round tables to be held in N'Djamena in 1992. However, because of technical difficulties, only the round table on promotion of the private sector would take place in 1992. Consequently, in the draft decision, States and competent United Nations organizations and programmes were invited to participate actively in the round tables to be held in 1993.

66. Honduras, Singapore and Suriname had joined the sponsors of the draft decision.

67. Mr. BEYARY (Saudi Arabia), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.20 on behalf of the sponsors, commented on its various provisions and announced that China, the United Arab Emirates and Senegal had become sponsors.

68. Mr. WANG Xinggen (China) said that China wished to become a sponsor of draft decision A/C.2/47/L.19.

69. Mr. MOHAMED (Sudan) said that the Sudan wished to become a sponsor of draft decision A/C.2/47/L.19.

AGENDA ITEM 88: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued)

70. Mr. da COSTA PEREIRA (Portugal) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.17, entitled "International assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola", on behalf of the sponsors. He said that the text needed to be improved, and that he thus looked forward to the informal consultations on that issue.

(Mr. da Costa Pereira, Portugal)

71. Portugal was deeply concerned at the situation in Angola and was dismayed by the recent violence, which threatened the peace process and the implementation of the Peace Accords. It would continue its efforts to persuade all the parties to exercise restraint and to engage in a constructive dialogue without delay. Peace and stability were essential for the economic rehabilitation of Angola, and the difficult economic and social situation in that country required the urgent attention of the international community. Given the seriousness of the situation, Member States and the international organizations must commit themselves to rendering all possible assistance to the Angolan people.

72. Burkina Faso, Honduras, Madagascar, Niger and Nigeria had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
35th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 10 November 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING SPONSORSHIP OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.35
18 November 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

92-57651 6263S (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/47/3, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/83, A/47/132, A/47/212-E/1992/54, A/47/222-E/1992/57 and Corr.1, A/47/225-S/23998, A/47/267, A/47/278-E/1992/77, A/47/283-E/1992/83, A/47/289-E/1992/68, A/47/294-E/1992/84, A/47/338, A/47/375-S/24429, A/47/403, 407, 408, 411, 445, 446, 499 and 627; A/C.2/47/L.2 and L.5)

1. Mr. SUŽIEDELIS (Lithuania), speaking on behalf of the Baltic States, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the impact of the evolution of East-West relations on global growth and development (A/47/403), adding that the Baltic delegations associated themselves fully with the statement made by the representative of Poland on that topic. They were somewhat surprised to learn that the report was one of the first to attempt to analyse the spectacular transformation which was affecting a substantial and growing number of States Members of the United Nations. In that and other reports, the dissolution of the former Soviet Union had been portrayed almost entirely in a negative light; the Baltic delegations regretted that those reports had not addressed the long-term positive impact such changes might bring. The Baltic countries could now endeavour to rationalize trade policies and strengthen the comparative advantages of their respective economies, which would henceforth be responsive to global trade patterns. In future greater attention should be devoted to the differences between, and the specific national characteristics of, the countries in transition, particularly the Baltic States and the successor States to the Soviet Union. It was not enough to treat those countries as a single economic unit, or to divide them just into "potentially developing" and "more industrialized" States. The Baltic States were prepared to work closely with United Nations in providing the necessary statistics and information for a more adequate recognition of national characteristics in future studies.

2. Much time had been spent discussing the question of the diversion of assistance away from the developing countries in favour of the economies in transition, but recent studies had concluded that no such diversion was taking place. As had been pointed out earlier, transition must be considered as a problem in its own right, with a full examination of all the aspects of the process. The lessons to be learned from the political, economic and social reforms going on in Central and Eastern Europe would have relevance not only for the countries directly affected, but for the international community as a whole.

3. The development goal enunciated by the Secretary-General at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) of "improvement of human well-being" was central to both the economic and the political transformation of Central and Eastern Europe. The Secretary-General had also suggested that the Economic and Social Council should also address issues which affected international security. The economic policies adopted by the

(Mr. Suziedelis, Lithuania)

countries in transition deserved to be included under that heading. The Baltic States therefore intended to join other countries in introducing a draft resolution in the Second Committee entitled "integration of economies in transition into the world economy".

4. Turning finally to Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/40 on activities of the United Nations system in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Baltic delegations welcomed the establishment of a United Nations presence in their region and the call for an integrated approach to United Nations operations throughout the region of the former Soviet Union. They appreciated the efforts made, in particular, by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

5. Mr. VALENTINO (Malta) welcomed the joint activities of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other international organizations in preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development to be held at Cairo in 1994. Malta intended to establish a national committee to serve as a focal point for preparatory activities and for the Conference itself, and a national report on population issues in Malta was currently under consideration. The issue of family planning programmes, health and family well-being was under consideration in preparation for the International Year of the Family. Malta would be hosting two conferences on the subject in 1993; one would be a regional conference and the other a non-governmental organizations' conference, and both were part of Malta's input for the International Year of the Family.

6. Malta hoped that special consideration would be given at the Conference to the question of population ageing, in view of the dramatic increase in the number and proportion of elderly persons. Malta had recently established the International Institute on Ageing (INIA) to provide training to key personnel within developing countries and to establish a network of collaboration among specialized agencies in both developed and developing countries, as well as to promote exchange of information through regular publications and monographs.

7. The Governing Council of UNDP had emphasized the strong and increasingly clear linkage between population concerns and poverty, the environment and development, and had urged UNFPA to take population concerns fully into account in the follow-up of UNCED. Population growth was directly linked to sustainable development; therefore, successful population programmes, through sound investment in education, health, employment and family planning, would contribute to a reduction of poverty and improve economic and social growth. He hoped that the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development would adopt an effective plan of action. The success of the Conference would depend on what was achieved at the preparatory meetings and on the active participation of Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and experts. He conveyed his Government's gratitude to the Government of Egypt for its offer to host the Conference.

8. Mr. ROTHERMEL (Director, Division for Global and Interregional Programmes, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), speaking on prevention and control of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), and the response of UNDP to the HIV epidemic within the framework of the global AIDS strategy, said that the first decade of the AIDS epidemic had yielded much research in the social and medical sciences and had also pointed to the ever-increasing array of economic, political, legal and ethical issues which the epidemic presented. HIV was present in virtually every country of the world, and its transmission was facilitated by the increasing movement of refugees, immigration, tourism and international trade. UNDP had been responding to requests for assistance from Governments since the mid-1980s; AIDS occupied a high place on its agenda of development priorities. UNDP had continued to focus on the development dimensions of AIDS within the framework of the World Health Organization/UNDP Alliance to Combat AIDS. Through its field offices, UNDP had provided assistance with integration of national AIDS plans to overall development policies and priorities, resource mobilization, support for programme development and delivery, and minimization of the impact of HIV/AIDS on social and economic development. At the global level, UNDP had been closely associated with WHO in the efforts to develop accessible and affordable drugs and vaccines for developing countries.

9. The direct and indirect costs of the epidemic promised to be enormous. Indirect costs would far exceed those directly related to the provision of treatment and care. The AIDS epidemic claimed those in their most productive years, thereby seriously threatening national economies, particularly those with a single dominant or several key formal sector industries, such as mining, tourism or agriculture, where a dramatic depletion of the workforce or a reduction in productivity could affect the gross national product (GNP), export earnings and public revenue, as well as cause a critical reduction in investment in education and training. The cost of coping with the HIV epidemic could be expected to escalate until it absorbed a significant part of developing nations' budgets. At the household level, there would be a loss of income, assets, savings and productivity, with an increase in health-related expenditures and time spent caring for the sick.

10. The epidemic would place extra burdens on women and on lower-income groups in general. AIDS appeared to spread more readily among the poorer sections of society and imposed relatively larger costs on the poor than on the rich. Globally, prevalence rates among women were catching up with, and, in some cases, were expected to overtake, those of men. Many epidemiological studies continued to study women as commercial sex workers or as sources of infection to their children, to the exclusion of most women's concerns. UNDP had given specific directives to promote prevention, care and support programmes for women.

11. Respect for individuals and their communities was essential if effective and sustainable behaviour change was to be achieved. Community-based organizations were uniquely placed to understand and respond to the challenges that the epidemic engendered. Community-level activities would allow

(Mr. Rothermel)

participants to identify their own specific needs and to ensure that the strategies chosen could be implemented and sustained. UNDP continued to pursue the strengthening of national capacity for collaborative partnerships and working relationships within the United Nations system, in particular with WHO, other donor agencies and non-governmental organizations, including the private sector. It was essential that communities and Governments should be able to respond to the epidemic in a complementary and mutually supportive fashion.

12. Mr. NEBENZIA (Russian Federation) said that there had been an important consensus at the latest session of the Economic and Social Council on the need to make the fullest use of the new international political and economic realities for a thorough reform of the economic and social sector of the United Nations. In that connection, he welcomed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Enhancing international cooperation for development: the role of the United Nations system" (E/1992/82 and Add.1).

13. An important result of the high-level segment had been the consensus on the need for a rational division of labour among the multilateral financial and trade institutions, in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the United Nations on the basis of their respective comparative advantages. The high-level segment had been successful and should be a feature of future annual sessions of the Economic and Social Council. At its latest session, important moves had been made towards a final elimination of ideological and political conflict from the Council in favour of a constructive search for mutually acceptable solutions.

14. The work of the coordination segment had been fruitful. In a situation of limited resources it was vital to achieve precise and close coordination of the various subdivisions of the United Nations system, not only in order to eliminate duplication, but also to harmonize the principles and objectives of system-wide strategy. Topics for consideration in the coordination segment should have been more carefully selected and there should have been more discussion of issues of concern to a majority of United Nations organizations and institutions in order better to analyse United Nations and intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and make practical recommendations for their enhancement.

15. Effective use should be made of the operational activities segment to harmonize those activities to recent international changes and to the general restructuring of the social and economic sector of the United Nations.

16. He welcomed, in particular, Council resolutions 1992/38 and 1992/40 dealing, respectively, with the Chernobyl disaster and the activities of the United Nations system in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

(Mr. Nebenzia, Russian Federation)

17. His delegation commended the Council on the encouraging progress it had made in reforming the social and economic sector of the United Nations. It concurred with many of the conclusions set forth in the report on the impact of the evolution of East-West relations on global growth and development (A/47/403), in particular, with the view that East-West cooperation was unlikely to impact negatively on cooperation between the West and the developing countries, that the credits provided to the transition economies remained comparatively small when measured against their needs and that increased access to the markets of developed countries was the best form of assistance which the West could offer to the countries in transition. In conclusion, while welcoming the Organization's efforts to assist those countries, he believed that its involvement in assistance efforts could be still further increased.

18. Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia) said that his delegation had welcomed the high-level segment of the Council under its reconstituted format and believed that continuation of that format would stimulate productive dialogue and the further convergence of views. The end of the cold war had brought with it brighter prospects for a more peaceful and humane world order, in a context of increasing consensus on certain key aspects of development. An unprecedented opportunity had thereby been provided for strengthening international cooperation for development and for the eradication of poverty, in which process the United Nations was called upon to play a revitalized role.

19. Those positive developments notwithstanding, the World Economic Survey 1992 painted a grim picture of a world economy in deep recession, stalled development, deepening disparities in international economic relations and the stagnation of the developing countries. Africa had been the hardest hit, while the economies in transition continued to falter and the gap between rich and poor countries to widen. Efforts by developing countries to address their problems had been hampered by the unfavourable international economic environment, which had been rendered still more unpredictable by the integration of the Eastern European countries into the world economy. Joint, concerted action was needed to overcome those problems.

20. Indonesia was convinced of the need for the further restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, with a view to making the system both more democratic and more effective and to building the Economic and Social Council into a powerful instrument for accelerating development and combating poverty. Any further steps in the process of restructuring should, however, be based on General Assembly resolutions 45/264 and 46/235 and should not depart from the democratic principles underpinning the decision-making process of the United Nations.

21. His delegation supported the establishment of closer links between the United Nations system and multilateral financial and trade institutions, and had therefore welcomed the high-level segment of the restructured Council, which had a vital role to play in that process.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

22. Indonesia fully endorsed the call, made by the Council in its report, for international support commensurate with the more open and liberalized trading policies pursued by many developing countries. It remained fully committed to the successful and balanced conclusion of the Uruguay Round, and called on all the parties concerned, and particularly the seven major industrialized countries, to resolve their differences, pointing out that collapse of the Round would most probably lead to trade war.

23. With reference to operational activities for development, his delegation remained convinced of the continued validity of the provisions of resolutions 44/211 and 46/219 and therefore welcomed the various proposals on the establishment of a better system for the financing of operational activities.

24. He stressed the importance of regional integration and affirmed Indonesia's support for an enhanced role for the regional commissions. He drew attention to the importance attached by the recent Non-Aligned Conference of Heads of State or Government, held in Jakarta, to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, and stressed that population considerations should be fully integrated into all aspects of planning and policy-making, particularly in the light of the interplay between population factors, the pursuit of sustainable development and the safeguarding of the environment.

25. With regard to the situation of Palestine, Indonesia called for the prompt implementation of the Council's resolutions on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli settlements and on assistance to the Palestinian people.

26. In conclusion, he welcomed the new emphasis being placed on social issues as integral to the development process and reiterated the position of the non-aligned movement, as stated at the recent Conference, that the world summit for social development should place people and their social needs at the heart of the work of the United Nations.

27. Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) said that the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council had provided an opportunity for a most productive dialogue between delegations, senior Secretariat officials and the heads of specialized agencies and international multilateral institutions, and he therefore hoped that such high-level meetings would have a major role in the future work of the Council.

28. The coordination segment had laid the foundations for a useful division of duties between the Council and the General Assembly, while the operational activities segment had helped to harmonize the ongoing operational activities of the United Nations system for development and to synchronize them with the current reforms of the economic and social work of the Organization.

(Mr. Yegorov, Belarus)

29. Among the important decisions taken by the Council at its session, he highlighted resolution 1992/40 on activities of the United Nations in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States, which presented a comprehensive approach to the region, taking due account of the national priorities of the countries concerned. In addition, Belarus welcomed resolution 1992/43 on strengthening the role of the regional commissions, as well as resolution 1992/38 on the Chernobyl issue. In his view, the Council had made an impressive contribution to the reform of the social and economic sector of the United Nations.

30. His delegation fully agreed with the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/47/403) that cooperation between East and West was unlikely to impact negatively on the world economy or, in particular, on the economy of the developing countries and it welcomed current efforts by the United Nations system to assist the countries in transition and called for still more vigorous endeavours in that area.

31. Ms. ASHRAF (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), referring to chapter III (B) of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/47/3) which discussed coordination aspects related to the prevention of HIV/AIDS, said that the AIDS pandemic was by no means under control, despite all the concerted efforts to that end, and that continued high priority must be given to preventing and combating the disease. The HIV/AIDS discussion during the coordination segment of the Council had greatly enhanced understanding of how the various United Nations organizations could better coordinate their actions to combat the pandemic.

32. She stressed that attention must also be given to the socio-cultural and economic aspects of the pandemic and that a pragmatic and carefully coordinated approach, involving multisectoral national action plans, offered an essential instrument in combating and preventing the disease.

33. She described initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with a view to combating AIDS through preventive education, in cooperation with the World Health Organization Global Programme on AIDS (WHO/GPA) and with non-governmental organizations. Under its Programme of Education for the Prevention of AIDS, UNESCO had organized regional training measures to develop technical leadership in helping countries plan and implement effective AIDS control strategies.

34. In the area of human and social sciencies, UNESCO had responded to the Venice Appeal, undertaking a range of activities designed to alert the international community to the need to strengthen national programmes to combat AIDS. In addition, efforts had been made to promote the role of women in AIDS education programmes and to combat the spread of the disease among street children, particularly in large African towns.

(Ms. Ashraf, UNESCO)

35. The complacency which had once prevailed in parts of Asia and the Pacific with regard to AIDS had disappeared and AIDS information campaigns had been launched even by countries with very few reported AIDS cases, while all regions showed a marked increase in the involvement of non-governmental organizations in developing AIDS education materials. While lacking the necessary financial and human resources, UNESCO had the will to participate in the global efforts and would endeavour to play a catalytic role in raising the awareness of the international community.

ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING SPONSORSHIP OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

36. The CHAIRMAN announced that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt and Nigeria had become sponsors of draft decision A/C.2/47/L.19 submitted under agenda item 87 (b); Bosnia and Herzegovina and Egypt had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.20, also submitted under agenda item 87 (b); and Bosnia and Herzegovina had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.17 submitted under agenda item 88.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
36th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 11 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

later: Mr. GUERRERO (Philippines)
(Vice-Chairman)

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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 83: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

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92-57663 6420S (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.36
3 December 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)
(A/47/3, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/83, A/47/132, A/47/212-E/1992/54, A/47/222-E/1992/57 and Corr.1, A/47/225-S/23998, A/47/267, A/47/278-E/1992/77, A/47/283-E/1992/83, A/47/289-E/1992/68, A/47/294-E/1992/84, A/47/338, A/47/375-S/24429, A/47/403, A/47/407, A/47/408, A/47/411, A/47/445, A/47/446, A/47/499, A/47/627; A/C.2/47/L.2, A/C.2/47/L.5)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. SZEDLACSKO (Hungary) welcomed the steps taken to streamlining the work of the Economic and Social Council and said that the high-level meeting held within the framework of the new substantive session on the theme "Enhancing international cooperation for development: the role of the United Nations system" had been a success. It was clear, however, that the new format could still be improved, particularly as regards coordination. Careful selection of high-priority topics and a tighter focus were essential.

2. The reforms under way in many parts of the world could be seriously threatened if the processes of restructuring and liberalization were denied the encouragement of a strengthened, well-functioning multilateral trading system. All countries had an interest in increasing the efficiency of the system of international trade under GATT rules, widening its scope, establishing equal rules for all and maintaining a smooth flow of international trade. For Hungary, foreign economic relations were crucial to the process of development and to the satisfactory completion of the transition to a market economy.

3. In that context, he acknowledged with satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Impact of the evolution of East-West relations on global growth and development" (A/47/403), which contained numerous examples illustrating the fact that the complex issue of transition to a market economy could not be treated exclusively in the narrow context of its impact on a certain group of countries; the national characteristics of countries trying to cope with the problems of transition had to be taken into account. According to paragraph 7 of the report, the events in the East had not so far had any substantial negative impact for most developing countries, and there was little evidence of any sizeable diversion towards the transition economies of official development assistance previously earmarked for developing countries.

4. The phenomena of transition to market economy, including reintegration in world economy as well as reconstruction, deserved attention and detailed analysis by the United Nations. Although the burden of reform had to be carried by the countries in transition themselves, the existence of a helpful external environment remained one of the essential conditions for the successful completion of the process.

(Mr. Szedlacsko, Hungary)

5. Hungary wished to reiterate the importance it attached to the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in Cairo in 1994. His Government had recently set up a national committee to work on the project and was ready to take an active part in the preparation of the Conference at the international level.

6. His delegation shared the concerns of those who believed that the AIDS pandemic was far from being under control and that fighting the disease continued to be a priority issue.

7. Mr. YENEL (Turkey), referring to the International Conference on Population and Development, welcomed the statement by the Executive Director of UNFPA which clearly showed that preparations for the Conference were progressing in a most satisfactory manner. Turkey was setting up a national preparatory committee on which many governmental and non-governmental organizations would be represented.

8. Population was no longer being treated as a purely demographic issue. The fact that it was closely related to many other policy issues was now recognized. High rates of population growth were increasingly viewed as an obstacle to social and economic growth and associated with poverty and environmental degradation. Economic and social policies had to be developed in an integrated manner. Progress in the economic and social fields helped to slow population growth in the developing countries. In encouraging family planning activities, cultural and socio-economic considerations had to be taken into account. Women had a decisive role to play in efforts to create awareness. Turkey had strengthened its mother and child care and family planning services in rural areas and had expanded its information and education programmes as a priority item under its development policies.

9. Excessive urbanization was creating serious problems and creating new demands on health and education services and housing and infrastructure facilities which the public authorities could no longer satisfy. Policies had to be devised to reverse the process.

10. Migration from rural areas to cities and from poorer countries to richer ones was a problem of economic development for which lasting solutions had to be found and which had to be viewed in the broader context of education and mobilization of resources.

11. It was to be hoped that the Conference would address those issues in a pragmatic manner and would offer realistic solutions for their alleviation.

12. Mr. KHANI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council was an essential process. In continuing the efforts being made in that area, advantage should be taken of the improved international climate.

(Mr. Khani, Syrian Arab Republic)

13. The General Assembly had repeatedly reaffirmed the sovereignty of the Palestinian population of the occupied Arab territories including Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan over its natural resources and condemned all the measures and practices applied by Israel with the aim of exploiting those resources for its own benefit. In the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/294-E/1992/84), those practices, and especially those of confiscating lands and of monopolizing the water resources of the population of the occupied territories, were condemned once again. The Israeli authorities had imposed tight restrictions on water use by the Arab inhabitants of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan in order to supply the Zionist settlements and had diverted the waters of several watercourses, including the Litani river in Lebanon, thus reducing the area of cultivated lands and causing the depopulation of those regions, particularly on the Arab side of the Golan.

14. Israel was also continuing its policy of confiscating lands and destroying fruit trees by spraying toxic chemicals, practices which were changing the climate as well as the nature of the lands and thus constituted a flagrant violation of several United Nations resolutions. Those practices, aimed at driving the inhabitants from their villages and homes in the occupied territories, had been intensified in spite of the peace negotiations in progress. They had contributed towards the deterioration of the Palestinians' living conditions and were contrary to the provisions of international instruments on international humanitarian law and on human rights. The Arab citizens of the occupied territories not only had a right to their own natural resources but should also be compensated for the damage they had suffered.

15. Mr. SINGH (India) said that, in the context of efforts made to streamline the work of the Economic and Social Council and to improve the complementarity of its work with that of the General Assembly, his delegation had proposed that the debate in the main committees of the Council should be curtailed because debates in the General Assembly duplicated the discussions in those two sessional bodies. The segment approach to the substantive session of the Council adopted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 45/264 and 46/235, and in particular the debate during the high-level segment, had made the deliberations more businesslike and action-oriented. All reforms in the economic and social field should be oriented towards improving the delivery capacity of the United Nations through a deeper understanding of the complex process of economic and social development. The success of the reforms in progress would be judged on the basis of the achievement of that objective. The discussions during the high-level segment and the position papers of the Group of 77 would provide the basis for further deliberations in the Second Committee. In judging any reform proposal, his delegation would apply the yardstick of the principles of the Charter and those elaborated in the position papers.

(Mr. Singh, India)

16. Coordination of activities within the United Nations system was one of the Council's principal functions and the progress that had been made in that regard was heartening. The forthcoming establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development would necessitate enhanced consideration of the coordination of systemwide activity related to the follow-up of Agenda 21; that would be an added responsibility for the Council.

17. In the area of operational activities for development, the General Assembly would be making several recommendations in the context of reform and the triennial review of those activities. His delegation attached great importance to those efforts aimed at improving the effectiveness of operational activities; such activities should be provided with an assured and stable resource base.

18. In 1992, three subsidiary bodies of the Council had been established, namely, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development, and the Committee on Natural Resources. General Assembly resolution 46/235, which established those bodies, had also set out their functions and mandates. The independence and integrity of those bodies must be preserved.

19. The relationship between population and development, including the environmental dimension, was the most pressing issue for several developing countries. Curbing population growth was the Indian Government's top priority, whence the importance of the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994. The Conference would not only increase global awareness of the linkages between population and development but would also lead to the formulation of an agenda for action to guide international cooperation in that area. His country welcomed the way in which the preparations for the Conference were proceeding. The activities undertaken at the national and regional levels would provide crucial inputs.

20. The AIDS pandemic was being felt the world over. The World Health Organization had estimated that by the year 2000, 30 to 40 million men, women and children would have been infected with HIV; that meant that, in eight years, the number of infected persons would have quadrupled. About 250,000 people were expected to die of the disease by the turn of the century - that was a frightening prospect. Apart from the human misery and suffering it caused, the pandemic was burdening development efforts and the provision of basic services to the population in general. The evolution of the global strategy to combat AIDS and the need to coordinate systemwide efforts had been discussed at the Council's June session. The only way the consequences of AIDS could be mitigated was through national efforts, research, expecially the sharing of information, and a significant stepping up of international efforts. The complexity of the issue necessitated a carefully coordinated effort involving health workers, researchers, development experts, NGOs and other institutions.

21. Mr. ROBINSON (United States of America) said that the Economic and Social Council's substantive session of 1992 had been a milestone event in the reform sweeping through the United Nations system. At that session, the Council had implemented changes mandated by General Assembly resolution 45/264. The number of resolutions had been significantly reduced, the duration of the session had been shortened, and the quality of discussion had been enhanced because of its greater pertinence. Since delegations had felt less obligated to produce resolutions, and they had been less tempted to take a hard-line stand for negotiating purposes. There would be little point in attempting to draft resolutions in the absence of meaningful discussion to identify problems and possible solutions. By serving as a forum for candid discussion, the Council had helped prepare for the current session of the General Assembly.

22. The policy dialogue with multilateral institutions had been notable for the active participation of the highest authorities of the World Bank, IMF, GATT and UNCTAD. The Council's prestige as a useful forum for responsible deliberation had been enhanced. The coordination segment would be more productive in future years as the Council focused on the actual efforts of the United Nations agencies to coordinate their activities on a given issue.

23. His delegation was pleased to see the changes in the Council's sessions. Thanks to the reforms that had been introduced, the Council would gradually take on a distinct role in the United Nations system, providing a forum for serious discussion on economic and social matters and coordination of operational activities.

24. Prosperity was essential for world peace; prosperity depended on a growth-oriented international economic order, an order in which the private sector served as the engine for the expansion of developing and emerging economies. During the high-level segment of the Council's session Member States had discussed the role of the United Nations system in enhancing international cooperation for development. That meant that new emphasis should be placed on building economic partnerships among the private sectors of the different countries. The Council had endorsed a resolution on privatization which had been the product of consensus in the Commission on Transnational Corporations. Throughout the world, thousands of state-owned enterprises were being transformed into joint stock companies. By continuing to forge global consensus on that important phenomenon, the Council had sought to assist developing and emerging countries to achieve economic transition based on policies aimed at increasing economic efficiency, growth and sustainable development through privatization, the elimination of monopolies and deregulation of economic activities.

25. Member States had the responsibility to foster and support the free market reforms necessary to accelerate growth and strengthen democracy in the developing world and in the new democratic States. That should be done by promoting the private sector in those countries. The more a country relied on the private sector and on free and open markets, and the better its investment climate, the higher its rate of growth.

(Mr. Robinson, United States)

26. To continue developing entrepreneurship in all countries, the United Nations system must continually improve its activities for promoting free markets. The International Chamber of Commerce and the United Nations Development Programme had recently signed an agreement to cooperate in strengthening the relationship between entrepreneurs and chambers of commerce in developing countries and in emerging economies. As the President of the World Bank had stated in the Economic and Social Council, the key to growth was structural reform aimed at the creation of a viable private sector. The first step was to encourage small businesses, the second was to restructure or privatize large State enterprises. That was the way to open up the productive potential of key economic sectors, leading to growth and development.

27. In conclusion, he expressed the hope, as had the Secretary-General, that the Economic and Social Council would become as important as the Security Council, and become the "Council of the twenty-first century". Security, economic, social and humanitarian questions must be dealt with by the United Nations in a coordinated fashion across a broad spectrum.

28. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

29. Mr. BABA (Uganda) said that AIDS was a threat to the survival of mankind, spreading to areas which until present had been relatively untouched at a speed greater than during the initial phase. In Asia, and particularly in India, Thailand and Myanmar, the situation was alarming. It was estimated that by the year 2000 Asia could be the world's most severely affected area. Countries of Latin America, especially Brazil and Mexico, were seriously concerned about the incidence of the disease in their region. The desperate situation of the populations of Sub-Saharan Africa and other regions of the world in face of the pandemic was already well documented. It was projected that 3.8 million people - more than the total number of cases registered over the past 10 years - would develop AIDS by 1995. Total global funding for HIV/AIDS activities during the period 1986-1992 was estimated at US$ 864 million, yet according to WHO calculations US$ 965 million had been required to finance national prevention activities in the year 1990 alone. The amounts earmarked for prevention and care in the developing countries, where almost 80 per cent of people infected by the virus lived, remained very small. In view of that situation it was legitimate to ask whether the strategy adopted so far should not be reviewed. He wished to emphasize, however, that the input by United Nations agencies and donor organizations in the fight against the disease had been impressive. The preventive measures applied in the context of the WHO Global Programme on AIDS (mass media campaigns and community-based programmes designed to bring about behaviour change, distribution of condoms to female sex-workers, counselling, sterilization of injecting equipment and screening blood before transfusion) were known to have been effective.

(Mr. Baba, Uganda)

30. Prevention by education had been the focus of activities in the fight against AIDS up to the present, but it was now necessary to move beyond that area and explore other possibilities of achieving better results, such as developing care facilities and psychological support for HIV-infected people, ensuring the availability of common drugs required for treatment of opportunistic infections, scientific research, social-behavioural and biomedical research and research on HIV-2 occurrence, which was prevalent in some parts of Africa.

31. Knowledge of how to prevent the transmission of AIDS was now widespread but it was of little use if women, in particular, were not empowered to protect themselves. That was largely a matter of improving their social and economic status. In Sub-Saharan Africa, it was the women who were bearing the burden of care, increasing infection rates and growing pre-natal transmission, as well as bearing the social and economic weight of the disease. But women also had the greatest potential, if empowered to do so, to play a major role in bringing the pandemic under control. The strategy on AIDS should therefore be aimed above all at women and other vulnerable groups in the field.

32. Donor agencies had been at the forefront of the struggle against AIDS by providing resources through the WHO Programme or through bilateral aid. However, because of the chronic shortage of resources it was essential to improve donor coordination at the country level so as to avoid duplication of programmes and promote exchange of experience.

33. The leadership role of WHO in placing AIDS programmes on the agenda of many Governments of developing countries and the effectiveness of its Global Programme were unquestioned. However, AIDS in developing countries should also be addressed within the context of development issues and should be related to problems such as poverty, the position of women and children, education and the improvement of the health care system. In that regard, the alliance between WHO and UNDP should be strengthened and a multisectoral approach should be promoted. There were countries with resources and power to save lives from the terrible pandemic that was threatening mankind; their urgent response was called for. Individual and collective efforts were needed more than ever before.

AGENDA ITEM 83: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.21

34. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.21 entitled "Triennial policy review of the operational activities of the United Nations development system" on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution, which was the result of intensive negotiations, respected the spirit of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which it reiterated in more precise and more concise terms.

(Mr. Clavijo, Colombia)

35. A subparagraph which appeared in the text he was introducing had been omitted in error from the document distributed to members of the Committee. Presenting in detail the operational part of the draft, which was divided into six sections, he drew attention to paragraphs 4 to 7 of the section on national execution and paragraphs 9 to 14 of the section on programme approach. Paragraph 10 was designed to ensure a suitable distribution of tasks between the three entities referred to as well as between the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In paragraph 14, the country strategy note referred to was optional in nature, which explained the use of the term "interested recipient Governments". He then stressed the need for increased decentralization of activities, especially in connection with procurement of expertise and equipment. With regard to the following section, he explained that the provisions of paragraph 21, and especially of its subparagraphs (a) and (b), presupposed the existence of far-reaching consensus on the need to strengthen the role of the Resident Coordinator. In the section on reporting, auditing and evaluation, he drew attention to paragraphs 22, 24 and 26, explaining that the provisions of paragraph 24, which implied that the objectives of the first three sections of the draft could only be achieved through strengthening the recipient Governments' auditing capacity and accounting systems, were based on General Assembly resolution 44/211. In the final section on training, he drew attention to paragraph 27 and in connection with national capacities, stressed the need to take into account the particular problems of each country while not overlooking the regional level. He also drew attention to the four last paragraphs, stating that the final paragraph was perhaps the most important one of the draft as a whole.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
37th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 11 November 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ BALLON (Uruguay)

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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.37
20 November 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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92-57698 6280S (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/47/3, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/83, A/47/132, A/47/212-E/1992/54, A/47/222-E/1992/57 and Corr.1, A/47/225-S/23998, A/47/267, A/47/278-E/1992/77, A/47/283-E/1992/83, A/47/289-E/1992/68, A/47/294-E/1992/84, A/47/338, A/47/375-S/24429, A/47/403, 407, 408, 411, 445, 446, 449 and 627; A/C.2/47/L.2 and L.5)

1. Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada), noting with satisfaction the progress in restructuring and revitalizing the work of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, said that Canada supported the establishment of a two-tiered governance system for United Nations operational activities, as had been recommended by the Nordic countries. A considerably strengthened Economic and Social Council should be the first tier, with the authority to give policy direction to the four development organizations under its direct jurisdiction, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. There was also a need to strengthen the relationship between the Council, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and the specialized agencies, so that Council decisions would carry weight throughout the United Nations development system. Existing agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies should be revised, to reflect the new emphasis on coordination. ACC should concentrate on supplying the Council with reliable data and acting as a forum for working out the measures required to implement the Council's decisions.

2. Under its new governance responsibilities, the Council should assume a major role in assessing the United Nations development system, and it would also be the appropriate forum for review of the common country strategy documents. For those and other new responsibilities to be met fully, it would surely be necessary to add one or two weeks to the Council's annual meeting.

3. With regard to the second tier, Canada shared the view of the Nordic countries that the governing bodies of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP should focus essentially on operational issues. The ideal situation would be for those bodies to act as small, professional, "working boards" exercising their functions in close collaboration with management. They should meet frequently but briefly throughout the year to take substantive decisions on operational matters. UNDP's Capacity 21 programme had been criticized for having been initiated without Governing Council approval vividly demonstrating the need for operational governance to be exercised more than once or twice every year.

4. There did not seem to be an existing United Nations department in place to provide the management support which would be required to implement the decisions of the new Council and the governing bodies. The Secretariat would have to be restructured, with coordination being its prime mandate and role.

(Mr. Baillargeon, Canada)

5. It was important, too, to link the reformed United Nations development system to the post-United Nations Conference on Environment and Development institutional structures which would oversee the implementation of Agenda 21. It certainly would not be desirable for the Commission on Sustainable Development and the rest of the United Nations development system to drift into two unrelated spheres of activity. A new Secretariat structure, with one operating arm for the Council and another for the Commission, might be the route to take, particularly as it would help solidify the overriding concept of sustainable development as the central guiding principle for all United Nations organizations and agencies engaged in international development work.

6. Canada was pleased to see that the International Conference on Population and Development would concentrate on the linkages between population and sustainable development. It believed that non-governmental organizations had much to contribute to any examination of population and development issues, and hoped that they would participate fully in the Conference. Since it considered the forthcoming Conference as one of the most important events in the United Nations calendar in the current decade, his Government had established a committee to coordinate Canadian preparations for the Conference.

7. Mr. HOSSEINI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that global economic problems could be solved only in the context of consensus on such issues as development, the environment, finance, trade and the transfer of technology and further efforts were therefore required to promote international understanding. To that end, Iran supported the suggestion by Pakistan on the establishment of an open-ended working group on enhancing international cooperation for development but stressed that progress in that area must not be achieved at the cost of the system's ability to deal with the needs of the developing countries. Instead, all reforms should aim to increase the responsiveness of the system to international economic conditions in general and to the problems of the developing nations in particular.

8. With regard to structural reforms, his delegation fully supported broadening the scope of the high-level segment to include, inter alia, macroeconomic coordination at the global level. At the same time, the operational activities segment should be expanded with a view to decentralizing the activities of the system to the country level, thereby enhancing its role in the overall development process of the developing countries. Structural reforms were not in themselves sufficient, however, to guarantee the success of operational activities, which must be supported by adequate financial resources. The open-ended working group should therefore explore means of ensuring a stable supply of resources to the operational activities of the system.

9. The report of the Secretary-General on the question of Palestine (A/47/294) furnished additional evidence of the inhumane practices of the occupying authorities towards the legitimate owners of those territories. Settlers were being encouraged, with loans and tax incentives, to move into

(Mr. Hosseini, Islamic Republic of Iran)

the new settlements, while the indigenous Arab population faced enormous difficulties even in obtaining building permits. Listing other measures intended to disrupt Arab life in those territories, he called on the international community to put an end to the inhumane policies of the occupying authorities and to restore the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to establish an independent State on the entire land of Palestine.

10. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine) said that democracy and political and economic reforms were crucial prerequisites for social and economic progress. It was a matter for satisfaction that the new political circumstances had changed the climate of discussions in the Economic and Social Council. Ukraine was basically satisfied with the new organization of work of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and convinced of the viability of resolution 45/264. However, reform of the Council should not be limited to administrative and organizational innovations, but should serve to strengthen the work of the Council, which was called upon to develop a global approach and achieve a constructive balance of interests of the international community, particularly regarding the countries in transition. Ukraine welcomed Council resolution 1992/40 on activities of the United Nations system in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States and hoped that a similar resolution might be adopted at the current session of the General Assembly. In that connection his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Lithuania. Economic and social reform was an essential element in the debate on means of strengthening international cooperation for development.

11. The open exchange of views that had taken place during the high-level segment had made possible an in-depth analysis of that complex issue. The high-level segment should be made into a true forum for intergovernmental consultations on international economic and social problems. His delegation agreed with the Under-Secretary-General for Technical Cooperation for Development that debates in the high-level segment should be limited to a single topic and be conducted in a spontaneous and unofficial manner. An important topic feature of the session had been the discussion of proposals, in particular of the northern countries, on ways to reform the United Nations operational activities in order to enhance management efficiency and avoid duplication and fragmentation of organizational structure at Headquarters and in the field. However, care should be taken not to complicate the management system of the economic and social sector. Cumbersome organizational structures were not conducive to effectiveness. Careful consideration should be given to the usefulness of creating new bodies to guide operational activities. Participation of Member States in such bodies should be based on the strict and fair observance of the principle of rotation.

12. Ukraine attached great importance to the question of the strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. While his delegation was

(Mr. Goumenny, Ukraine)

not in full agreement with the Secretary-General's report on that issue, he welcomed Council resolution 1992/38.

13. Ukraine welcomed the adoption of Council resolution 1992/27 recommending the convening of a world summit for social development in 1995. It supported the holding in 1994 of the International Conference on Population and Development and it welcomed the approval by the Council of the draft declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. There had been interesting discussions at the session on the development of regional cooperation, in particular regarding the advantages of making broader use of the regional commissions to implement the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and on industrial development in Africa, as well as human rights, poverty eradication, support to vulnerable groups of the population and the fight against and prevention of AIDS. The reform process must become an integral part of the everyday work of the Council.

14. His delegation agreed with the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report on the impact of the evolution of East-West relations on global growth and development (A/47/403), in particular regarding the absence of any substantial negative impact for most developing countries from the events in the East. Ukraine concurred with the statements of the representatives of Poland, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Belarus regarding that document.

15. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China) said that the extensive discussions held during the High-Level Segment had marked a good start in the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, and expressed the hope that in future, the High-Level Segment would focus on one policy theme of major concern to the international community and the developing countries in particular. China supported the proposal of the Group of 77 that the High-Level Segment should give ongoing consideration to the question of global macroeconomic policies.

16. Given the ever-widening gap between North and South and between rich and poor, the United Nations should accord as much importance to development as it did to international conflict. The restructuring exercise should be governed by the principles of democracy, equity, objectivity, rationality, balance and effectiveness. Moreover, the regional commissions could play an important role in the promotion of development and international cooperation, and their role should be enhanced.

17. At its forty-eighth session, which had been held in April in Beijing, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted a declaration setting forth principles to guide regional economic cooperation. It launched a decade for the disabled in Asia and the Pacific and undertook to hold the fifth trade fair in Asia and the Pacific. A new momentum had been created to strengthen regional economic and social development, with a view to increasing the positive contribution of the Asian and Pacific region to global development and international cooperation.

(Ms. Yang Yanyi, China)

18. As a developing country and the most populous nation in the world, China attached great importance to the issue of population. It actively supported the planned International Conference on Population and Development, and was committed to assisting in the preparatory work so that the Conference should be a success.

19. Mrs. KHANUM (Bangladesh) said that no bold initiative had yet been taken to bridge the widening gap between rich and poor countries. The developing countries were locked in a major development crisis, which was exacerbated by the continuing recession in the industrialized countries. Against that background, Bangladesh was encouraged to see that progress was being made towards restructuring and revitalizing the Council. It fully endorsed the position of the Group of 77, and noted with satisfaction that the paper submitted by Bangladesh had been accepted as a basis for further negotiations within the Group.

20. The 1980s had seen continued marginalization of the least developed countries. The latter had undertaken to initiate far-reaching national measures to address their most daunting development problems, and the rest of the international community had undertaken to do as much as possible to help them. Bangladesh hoped that the developed countries would remain committed to that goal despite the current uncertainties in the global economic scene.

21. The least developed countries had embarked on fundamental policy reforms to revive output and growth, to encourage private initiative, to provide incentives to productive sectors, to develop human resources and to restore monetary and fiscal discipline; however, given the enormity of the challenges facing them, those actions alone were not enough. Official development assistance would have to be increased substantially in order for those countries to break the cycle of poverty and underdevelopment. The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s clearly set out the commitments of the international community in that important regard.

22. Since the adoption of the Programme of Action, and following the application of a new set of criteria, six new countries had been added by the General Assembly to the list of least developed countries. That would have substantial implications as far as resources were concerned. Bangladesh was concerned that the targets for assistance to the least developed countries might not be met, and called for appropriate measures to be taken.

23. Sustained and comprehensive action was also necessary to deal with the external indebtedness of the least developed countries and a number of developed countries had already provided significant debt relief. Additional resources should be sought not only through increased levels of development assistance but also by encouraging non-debt-creating resource flows such as direct foreign investment.

(Mrs. Khanum, Bangladesh)

24. Bangladesh welcomed the decision to hold the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994. Her Government was determined to fulfil its commitment on population control; its population policy sought to integrate family planning with nation-building activities, to ensure health care facilities for mother and child and to establish the two-child family as the norm.

25. However, the complexity and vastness of the problems of population, poverty and sustainable development suggested that without international cooperation and assistance it would be difficult to attain the desired objectives. The efforts of the developing countries to arrest population growth needed more assistance, and Bangladesh commended the efforts of UNFPA to raise extrabudgetary funds for that purpose.

26. Mr. NCHAPI (Lesotho) associated his delegation fully with the statement made by the delegate of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77. His delegation attached great importance to the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development and hoped that the reports and recommendations of the preparatory meetings and conferences would be transmitted to the capitals of the various Member States. The regional commissions had an important role to play in the preparatory process for the Conference. Lesotho would be an active participant in the forthcoming population conference to be held at Dakar in early December. The Government had already formed a national committee to coordinate the preparation of a national report on population in preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development and it had also completed the two United Nations population questionnaires. His delegation gave special thanks to all the countries that had contributed to the Voluntary Fund for supporting developing countries' participation in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, which would enable the least developed countries to participate in the preparatory meetings, as well as in the Conference itself. Finally, he thanked the Government of Egypt for its offer to host the Conference.

27. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that it was unfortunate that some delegations had attempted to use the Second Committee for political purposes. Israel had participated constructively in the debates and had expressed its willingness to share know-how and increase technical cooperation with interested developing countries. The reports and resolutions relating to the situation in the administered areas were negative, and encouraged hostility; they served merely to misdirect the people most in need of assistance, the Palestinian inhabitants of the territories, and to encourage them to continue hostile activities. He reminded delegations that Israel was currently the only State engaged in promoting the well-being, safety and social economic development of the Palestinians of the territories, who had made spectacular progress during the less than 26 years of Israeli administration.

28. He objected to the efforts to portray Israel as systematically opposing the provision of international assistance to the Palestinians and placing administrative and other obstacles in the way of such assistance. Israel not

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

only welcomed such assistance, but fully cooperated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other international organizations in implementing programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of the Palestinian inhabitants of the territories. Measures had been taken to intensify assistance in cooperation with UNDP and other agencies. However, Israel was unable to solve the economic needs of the territories by itself. It therefore encouraged the active participation and cooperation of international voluntary organizations as well as United Nations agencies. As was well known, UNDP had been unable to obtain even minimal funding for its established programme. It would be therefore advisable to redirect funds from futile surveys to UNDP projects which had already proved effective in meeting the needs of the population of the territories. Israel had repeatedly emphasized the need for additional resources to meet the growing requirements of the Palestinians. If sufficient means were allocated for projects aimed at improvement of the material conditions of the Palestinians, Israel would fully cooperate in their implementation. However, it firmly opposed any form of assistance to or cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

29. He was not suggesting that material well-being was an alternative to a political settlement. However, politically motivated debates and resolutions could only prejudice the ongoing efforts to advance peace in the Middle East, which were being conducted on the guidelines endorsed formally by the Madrid Conference. Since the beginning of the negotiations and especially since the formation of the new Government in Israel, progress had been achieved which had given renewed confidence in the future of the peace process and created the possibility of solving past conflicts and laying the foundation of a new Middle East. Israel had done its utmost to ensure the well-being of the population in the administered territories, and would continue to do so until such time as a political settlement was achieved.

30. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) said that the procedure adopted during the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council had permitted more efficient use of the time available and important conclusions had been reached at the high-level and coordination segments. In future sessions, Chile believed that efforts should be made to avoid formal statements; the latter could be submitted in writing and accepted as formally presented, enabling members to embark without delay on informal exchanges of views.

31. During its substantive session, the Council should pursue the objectives of rationalization and coordination implicit in the restructuring process and avoid rehashing the statements already made in the Second Committee. Similarly, time should not be wasted on debates where the speakers' interests and approaches to the problems were identical.

32. The inclusion of the heads of multilateral financial institutions in the high-level segment had been a most productive innovation and should be further developed at future sessions; in addition, the exchange of views with the heads of specialized agencies at both the high-level and the operational activities segments would greatly boost the efficiency of the Council's work.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

33. Chile welcomed the various initiatives put forward on the restructuring of the United Nations system, particularly those formulated by the Secretary-General, and believed that the consensus resolutions contained in the Council's report demonstrated wide acceptance of the crucial role to be played by the United Nations in the strengthening of international cooperation for development.

34. In the light of the inalienable link between the maintenance of peace and efforts to promote development and combat poverty, he hoped that the gains in world political security would also devolve to the benefit of international cooperation for development. Efforts to that end could only succeed if developing countries were offered an assured access to markets and technology.

35. With regard to coordination issues, Chile called for concerted efforts at the governmental and multilateral levels in two vital areas: the eradication of poverty and the prevention and combating of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

36. Mr. WRBA (Austria) said that the East-West rivalry had given way to a growing trend for the formation of regional trade blocs, which posed serious problems for countries outside such blocs. He noted the striking similarities between the development scenarios of the developing countries and the economies in transition, stressing that both groups needed international assistance attaining pluralistic democracy, establishing market economies and inviting international cooperation. Furthermore, the success of reforms in all those countries was also crucial to world stability.

37. Assistance should be viewed not as charity but as a means of encouraging investment and development of viable national market-based economic structures in the developing and transitional countries; particular emphasis must be placed on human capacity-building and the transfer of economic business know-how. Assistance efforts should not be wasted on investment in large scale and inefficient industrial projects, but should focus on the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises.

38. Austrian bilateral assistance was primarily channelled into educational programmes, as a key component of economic and political infrastructures. Programmes of cooperation had been established between academic institutions in Austria and the developing and transitional countries and training assistance was also being extended to media workers and diplomats.

39. Initiatives to improve micro-economic development conditions for those countries must be supported by corresponding macroeconomic measures, primarily in the form of financial assistance, by boosting the inflow of private capital into their economies, remedying their debt problems on a case-by-case basis and improving their access to industrialized markets. In that regard, Austria welcomed the free trade agreements concluded between the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the countries in transition.

(Mr. Wrba, Austria)

40. As coordination was vital to economic growth and development, by ensuring a more rapid disbursement of resources, increased information sharing among donors and closer cooperation between the international financial institutions and recipient countries, the institutional capacities of the Economic and Social Council must be further strengthened. In addition, new and strengthened roles should be assigned to the regional economic commissions, while regional formations such as the Central European Initiative offered a productive new form of cooperation. Although the final responsibility for economic and social development rested with the recipient country itself, international assistance was not a one-way process, since all the parties concerned stood to benefit from common economic prosperity.

41. Mr. SHREIM (Observer for Palestine) with the concurrence of the Committee, made a statement in reply to the statement by the representative of Israel, pointing out that the question of Palestine lay within the scope of the Committee's work. The only way the situation in Palestine could be improved was through liberation of the occupied territories and restoration of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

42. His delegation asked only that Israel should abide by the provisions of the relevant resolutions and reiterated its commitment to finding a solution to the Palestinian problem through the current peace process.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
38th meeting
held on
Thursday, 12 November 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 38th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.38
27 November 1992
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

92-57728 6332S (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

Draft resolution on assistance to Mozambique (A/C.2/47/L.26)

1. Mr. MBENNA (United Republic of Tanzania), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.26 on behalf of the original sponsors, and Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mali and Nepal, said that the text took into account the recently signed General Peace Agreement for Mozambique which had come into force on 15 October. The end of hostilities in Mozambique presented new challenges for the people and Government of Mozambique, and support would be needed for the electoral process, for emergency and rehabilitation assistance for refugees and displaced persons, and for programmes of demobilization of the armed forces. He drew particular attention to paragraph 7 of the draft resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 83: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on the triennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities of the United Nations system (A/C.2/47/L.22)

2. Mr. MALONE (United Kingdom), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.22 on behalf of the sponsors and Austria, said that Finland had inadvertently been listed as a sponsor and should be deleted from the list. He drew particular attention to paragraph 4 regarding the need for an overhaul of the resident coordinator system.

AGENDA ITEM 81: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/88-S/23563, A/47/225, A/47/312-S/24238, A/47/391, 437, 441, A/47/449-S/24566, A/47/499, 530, and 564; E/1992/47)

3. Mr. KHAN (Chief, Inter-organizational Cooperation, Department of Economic and Social Development (DESD)), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the item (E/1992/47), said that despite a steady improvement in living conditions in many parts of the world, the phenomenon of poverty had not receded significantly. While the proportion of the poor had decreased, absolute numbers had not declined, and in many parts of Africa and Latin America, the incidence of poverty had actually increased. Almost a quarter of the world's population, mainly women and children, lived in unacceptable conditions of deprivation.

4. Poverty eradication was a priority objective of the International Development Strategy for the 1990s and of the World Bank, and had recently been recognized as essential to sustainable development. Considerable efforts

(Mr. Khan)

had been made by the United Nations and its development institutions to develop common approaches and strategies for the eradication of poverty. In 1990, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had convened an inter-agency seminar to discuss how poverty eradication goals could be integrated into structural adjustment programmes. Poverty eradication had also been discussed extensively at the latest session of the Economic and Social Council. Summing up the discussions, the President had suggested that there was wide support for the development of a common approach consisting of operational guidelines for the organizations of the United Nations system, the development of common country-specific anti-poverty strategies and closer collaboration between the Bretton Woods institutions and the rest of the United Nations system for integrating poverty alleviation goals into structural adjustment programmes.

5. Mr. MASOOD (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that it had been estimated that there were currently 1.2 billion poor people in the developing countries; unless adequate measures were adopted, more than half the population of Africa would be below the poverty line by the end of the decade. Seventy-seven per cent of the world's population earned no more than 15 per cent of its income, and the average per capita GNP was $12,510 in the North and $710 in the South, a ratio of 18:1. In the past decade, there had been further deterioration of the external economic environment, leading to increased pressures on the most vulnerable segments of the population of the developing countries. Those countries had engaged in structural adjustment programmes at great social and political costs, including, in particular, a marked decrease in calorie intake by the poorer segments of society, which adversely affected health.

6. Although the entire United Nations system seemed to be engaged in activities relating to poverty eradication - one of the highest priorities of the International Development Strategy for the 1990s - their effectiveness had been blunted by the uncoordinated manner in which they were being undertaken. The international community had yet to develop a system that would respond equitably to the increasing interdependence of the world economy. The existing pattern of integration on unequal terms continued to worsen, thus threatening the prospects for peace and security. The Group of 77 pledged to pursue economic growth with a human face and to promote a partnership for global development based on equality and equity.

7. Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that while the issue of poverty eradication was indeed urgent, the prospects were not all gloomy. It would take an increase of only 10 per cent in the average income of the poor to bring them above the poverty line; that was not an inordinate price to rid the world of extreme poverty. There was a growing consensus on the practical measures needed to tackle global poverty. Economic growth would alleviate poverty only if it was broad-based. There was a need to invest in the human development of the poor, particularly in their education, health care and training; that would be of particular benefit to women and children, who

(Mr. Barnett, United Kingdom)

suffered disproportionately from the impact of poverty. Three quarters of the poor in developing countries lived in ecologically fragile areas. Poverty was closely interlinked with population growth and environmental degradation. Government policies must be designed having in mind the impact they would have on the poor and especially the most vulnerable of the poor. Meaningful participation in the political process for the poorest members of society was an essential precondition for genuine, sustainable development. Many countries did not devote adequate resources to poverty alleviation, and much could be done by reallocating existing resources.

8. Excessive military spending should be curtailed and sound macroeconomic policies adopted to promote job creation by creating a supportive climate for small- and medium-sized businesses. There should be efficient and realistic fiscal and monetary assistance. Resources should not be squandered on inefficient or prestigious public investment, but rather be redirected to education and health care, especially at the primary level. Poor people, and in particular, poor households headed by women, were often excluded from such programmes.

9. The industrialized countries could promote economic growth by encouraging favourable external economic conditions, including open trading systems, debt-relief measures and concessional aid which took note of national priorities. At the Rio Conference the European Community and its member States had announced an initial commitment of 3 billion European Currency Units further to strengthen their assistance to developing countries in the field of sustainable development and to increase their funding for Agenda 21. In that connection, his delegation endorsed the recommendations made by the President of the Economic and Social Council in his concluding statement at the Council's last session. The European Community and its member States wished to ensure that those recommendations were followed up. The developing countries must define national priorities, implement them effectively and take the lead role in coordinating United Nations assistance for poverty alleviation. The industrialized countries must provide appropriate, better targeted assistance to developing countries, in particular to enhance their institutional capacity for policy formulation and the coordination of programme implementation.

10. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the new UNCTAD Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation would have an important role to play in promoting poverty eradication as an essential part of development assistance. A consistent, well-considered approach to poverty alleviation should be developed under the leadership of resident coordinators on the basis of national priorities and with focus on key areas. An integrated approach to poverty alleviation in the field needed to be backed up by more effective coordination at Headquarters. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) would have a particular contribution to make in that respect.

(Mr. Barnett, United Kingdom)

11. Finally, he welcomed the attention being given by institutions such as the World Bank and UNDP to improving statistics on poverty, particularly with respect to women and children. United Nations analytical capacity needed to be more closely linked with country-level operations and capacity.

12. Mr. ROJAS (Mexico) said that the issue of poverty had become one of vital importance to the international community, as societies increasingly turned their attention to the quality of life of the individual. The United Nations should take the lead in the fight against poverty.

13. In Mexico major changes had been made which reflected the situation of the present times. There were economic and political changes, but the most significant one was the re-establishment of the relationship of the individual with political institutions and with the environment. Opportunities were opening up for all Mexicans. After years of stagnation, the economy was growing faster than the population. There was a new definition of the economic relationship of Mexico to the rest of the world, and the changed economic role of the State had given Mexico sound public finances, a smaller external and domestic debt and stronger management of the economy.

14. The most important aspect of the economic change was the State's new conception of, and emphasis on, social policies. Under the National Solidarity Programme, investments had grown from $933 million in 1989 to $3,585 million in the present year. In 1992, government expenditure relating to that programme, and to education, health, food, the environment and basic services accounted for 50 per cent of total public expenditure.

15. Every day, thousands of Mexicans were added to the programme of health care coverage. Schools were being built or rehabilitated, and electricity, drinking water and drainage were being brought to Mexicans who had not previously enjoyed such amenities, for although providing services would not, in itself, overcome poverty, eliminating inadequacies in services would establish an environment conducive to productive work. The measures to eradicate poverty were carried out in a context of care for the environment, although not one of conservation as such. The aim was to seek a fair balance between the needs of the environment and the needs of the people inhabiting it.

16. The Solidarity Programme was based on four simple principles: respect for the will, initiatives and organizational structures of individuals and communities; full and effective community participation and organization; shared responsibility; transparency, honesty and efficiency in management of resources. On that basis, the historical experience of community participation was being revived. Each community established a Solidarity committee to direct activities: organizing, directing and implementing projects as a community undertaking rather than leaving everything to the Government. In four years, more than 100,000 committees had been established, showing that Solidarity was truly a policy involving all members of society.

(Mr. Rojas, Mexico)

17. Another element in overcoming poverty in the developing countries involved rethinking economic relations between countries. With the active participation of UNDP and other international organizations such as the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, Mexico was organizing meetings with various Latin American and other countries for the purpose of exchanging experience.

18. It would be desirable to establish an information network covering the programmes being carried out by the United Nations system and by Governments in the fight against poverty. Overcoming poverty was not simply a matter of charity nor of moral commitment, but a question of survival. Democracy, freedom and peace could not flourish in poverty, nor could the environment be preserved at the expense of the quality of life of millions of people.

19. Mrs. KHANAM (Bangladesh) said that while on the political front there was hope of a new world order where peace would prevail everywhere, insufficient attention was being given to addressing the root causes of poverty. Poverty not only could destroy peace and stability but was a prime cause of environmental degradation in the developing countries.

20. Limited resources, high population growth, limited export markets, overdependence on agriculture and other factors had all contributed to the growth of poverty in the developing countries. Bangladesh had adopted far-reaching measures to combat the problem. Steps had been taken to increase domestic saving and encourage investment in productive sectors. Incentives were provided for investment in remote and underdeveloped areas. The utmost importance had been assigned to population control, and the country's population growth rate had dropped to 2.16 per cent. As natural disasters such as cyclones and floods also contributed to poverty, the Government of Bangladesh had drawn up appropriate plans and hoped for significant international cooperation in that area. Food production had almost doubled since the early 1970s, per capita calorie availability had risen dramatically and access to food for the disadvantaged had greatly improved. Efforts had also been made to promote labour-intensive small industries in rural areas, notably for marginal farmers, the landless and also destitute women.

21. Poverty eradication was a key objective of the fourth Five-Year Plan. There was a need for institutional restructuring and decentralized participatory planning to bring the poor and disadvantaged from the periphery to the hub of the development programmes. Sound fiscal and monetary policies were being followed in an attempt to restore macroeconomic stability.

22. Mr. HADDAD (World Bank), stressing that sustainable poverty reduction had always been the over-arching objective of the World Bank, recalled how the Bank's strategy for achieving that end had shifted over the years from one that focused mainly on economic growth to one that consisted of two equally important and mutually reinforcing elements, namely, broadly based economic growth and systematic investment in the development of human resources.

(Mr. Haddad, World Bank)

23. Recently, the recognition that without environmental protection, lasting development was impossible had led to the addition of a third facet, namely environmental protection, to the Bank's poverty reduction strategy. The next step had been to integrate the three-part strategy into Bank operations. In 1991, the Bank had published a policy paper entitled "Assistance Strategies to Reduce Poverty", demonstrating how assistance strategies could be grounded more firmly in a country-specific analysis of poverty, and proposing measures to accelerate widespread adoption of the currently best available practice. In 1992, the Bank had published two volumes aimed at practical implementation, the "Poverty Reduction Handbook" and the "Operational Directive on Poverty Reduction".

24. Twenty country poverty assessments had been completed since 1989, helping to strengthen dialogue and develop lending programmes in support of government efforts to reduce poverty. In terms of Bank lending targeted specifically at poverty reduction, the total was about $3 billion, or about 12 to 15 per cent of total World Bank lending, including projects designed to improve the productivity of small farmers; to provide basic health care, nutrition services, water and sanitation; and to provide basic infrastructure in regions of concentrated poverty.

25. In the long term, the progress of the developing countries in reducing poverty would depend primarily on their own domestic resources and their income from foreign trade. In the short term, however, where those countries demonstrated a real commitment to reducing poverty the external resources needed to support the commitment must be made available by the international community.

26. Mr. BARRERO (Colombia) said that the end of the cold war had not brought the international community any closer to establishing mechanisms to ease the lives of the hundreds of millions of the world's poor. The so-called "new world order", which was based primarily on the avoidance of confrontation, did not place sufficient emphasis on solving the problem of increasing poverty in the developing world. Paradoxical as it might seem, unless the international community took the necessary measures to alleviate and eradicate poverty, it might turn out that the end of the cold war had adversely affected a large part of the world's population.

27. While some social indicators, such as life expectancy and elementary education, had improved in recent decades, the number of the world's poor had continued to increase. It was currently estimated that 1.4 million persons lived in poverty, and that number was not expected to decline before the end of the century.

28. The process of democratization and the broadening of political and social freedoms that was spreading throughout the world would be viable only if the international community succeeded in improving the living conditions of the poorest segments of society. Social and economic objectives should not only

(Mr. Barrero, Colombia)

be compatible, they should also reinforce each other. Economic programmes that encouraged openness and privatization and, in general, the trend towards a market-oriented economy could have devastating social repercussions unless Governments, both individually and jointly, developed clear and resolute policies to cushion the impact of such policies on the most vulnerable groups of the population.

29. While the number of poor people was increasing in the developed countries, poverty was much more prevalent in the developing countries; the latter should therefore receive assistance on a priority basis. In the developed countries, privatization and expenditure on armaments continued to divert attention from social problems. As a result, even the industrialized countries were faced with a deteriorating social situation, which made them less inclined to participate in programmes to combat poverty in the developing countries.

30. Unless the international economic environment was conducive to growth it would be difficult for the developing countries to obtain funds to finance their social development programmes. Without an open and fair international trading system, the prices and volume of their exports would continue to decline, which would have an adverse effect on the implementation of social policies.

31. The scarce resources that were currently allocated for international assistance to the developing countries could be markedly increased if the industrialized countries removed their protectionist trade barriers. The gospel of the free market, preached as dogma to the developing countries, was of even greater relevance to the developed world. The double standard practised by those who advocated economic openness as the panacea for the developing countries while remaining silent about the industrialized countries' protectionist restrictions, could not be tolerated. An open and transparent trade system required greater efforts in the area of cooperation and the solution of the most critical problems of the poorest countries.

32. Official development assistance (ODA) should be a relevant source of cooperation, as part of the resources for implementing human development policies. Unfortunately, ODA targets were far from being achieved. International bodies, in particular the agencies of the United Nations system, as well as the regional commissions and the financial institutions, should make greater efforts to combat poverty and improve the efficiency of coordinating mechanisms.

33. While the nature of poverty was well known, the international community lacked a strategy to combat it effectively. The Department of Economic and Social Development should demonstrate the wisdom of the recent reforms in the United Nations Secretariat by achieving effective results in that field; so far, such results had not been forthcoming.

34. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) said that, at its substantive session of 1992, the Economic and Social Council had emphasized the need for greater and more effective coordination in the United Nations system's efforts to combat poverty. The Council had singled out the most vulnerable groups, such as women and refugees, for special support and had stressed the need to mitigate the harsh social consequences of structural adjustment programmes. It had also underscored the importance of taking resolute measures to remove the social causes of poverty, which included illiteracy, poor health and the subordination of women.

35. His delegation supported the idea of modifying existing arrangements for system-wide coordination to encompass poverty issues in a more comprehensive manner. It also agreed that United Nations policies and activities in the field of poverty alleviation should be guided by internationally agreed strategies and objectives, such as those contained in Agenda 21 and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. At the country level, his delegation welcomed the focus on the responsibility of national Governments for defining national priorities and their assumption of a leading role in coordinating United Nations assistance for poverty alleviation.

36. Coordination would not bring about the desired objective of eradicating poverty unless greater emphasis was placed on accelerating broad-based, people-centred and sustainable development. Policy measures undertaken by the developing countries had tended to rely on a combination of sustained economic growth, income distribution, especially through public expenditure on social services, the channelling of basic needs programmes to the poor, and the activities of the poor themselves. However, most developing countries, even those that had received generous amounts of foreign aid, had not been able to accrue the resources necessary to reduce mass poverty significantly. While a number of countries had achieved some progress through sustained and rapid growth, they had become more polarized and their poverty levels had not been appreciably reduced, because of the unequal distribution of the benefits of such growth.

37. Human beings were at the centre of all development activities, and human resources were an essential means of achieving economic, social and development objectives. The reinforcement of human and social development should contribute to overall development by ensuring that all individuals developed their potential to the fullest. Only then would there be prosperity for all.

38. Mr. MA Zhaoxu (China) said that, as a result of their unremitting efforts over the years, a number of developing countries had achieved some success in alleviating poverty. The experiences of those countries, which included China, indicated that international cooperation for the eradication of poverty should give priority to three issues.

(Mr. Ma Zhaoxu, China)

39. First, it was necessary to revitalize the economic development and growth of the developing countries and poor regions. The key to eradicating poverty lay in tapping the economic potential of poor countries and regions and channelling it into development activities in order to build endogenous capacities for developing commodity-based economies. It was important that the poor countries themselves should formulate and implement their own poverty eradication strategies. Such strategies should include maximum and effective use of valuable human resources, greater financial and material assistance to poor regions and populations, improved infrastructure, better management of poverty eradication projects, transfer and disssemination of advanced technology and know-how, institution of a social security system, education, and human resources development. At the same time, efforts for poverty eradication should be combined with environmental protection.

40. Second, the eradication of poverty in the developing countries should be viewed as a common responsibility of all members of the international community. Progress in that area would contribute to the prosperity and stability of the developed countries, as well as the development of the developing countries themselves. The international community, in particular the developed donor countries, should therefore act quickly to fulfil their pledges to improve their assistance in both quantitative and qualitative terms. In particular, the World Bank and the International Development Association (IDA) should play their due role in that area. Since poverty was closely related to such issues as trade, external debt and environment, the developed donor countries should endeavour to create favourable conditions for developing countries by improving their terms of trade, reducing their debt burden and helping them protect their environment.

41. Finally, the United Nations should further strengthen its work in the area of poverty alleviation and eradication by increasing its efficiency and effectiveness in rendering assistance to developing countries and enhancing coordination among its various sectors and institutions. At the same time, all parts of the United Nations system should increase their cooperation and coordination with multilateral financial institutions in the field of poverty eradication and make maximum use of their comparative advantages.

42. Mr. SINGH (India) said that the first lesson that India had learned in its efforts to combat poverty was that there were no global solutions. Even at the national level, there was no strategy that could be applied to all regions and all vulnerable groups. Country-specific programmes and, within countries, programmes directed at target groups were the only ones that had any chance of succeeding.

43. India had placed great emphasis on projects and programmes that took the form of labour-intensive, employment-generating projects that simultaneously built up the social infrastructure; food-for-work programmes; and schemes that enhanced the scope and content of basic minimum needs programmes. In addition, India had endeavoured to focus on direct benefits to the poorest of

(Mr. Singh, India)

the poor. The success or failure of a programme was measured by the degree to which it had resulted in self-sufficient and self-sustaining productive employment. A successful poverty eradication programme was one that could exist and sustain itself after it ceased receiving external support.

44. International cooperation for poverty eradication should be based on national plans, programmes and priorities, and no attempt should be made to impose a global solution. The programming, planning and national execution of poverty eradication should be led by national Governments, and the efforts of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes should be incorporated into such national efforts.

45. In making such efforts, countries such as India had also made dramatic changes to integrate themselves more fully into the global economy. Such integration would enhance their ability to deal more effectively with mass poverty and social inequalities. Without long-term external support, national efforts would be greatly strained.

46. In the belief that economic growth was not in itself sufficient to overcome poverty, India had allocated considerable financial and human resources to poverty programmes. Those programmes would be greatly assisted by an increased transfer of concessional resources and by fulfilment of the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development assistance.

47. Biotechnology had a crucial role in increasing the productivity of agriculture and the well-being of the poor. India therefore hoped that the technology-rich countries would respond to the provisions of resolution 46/141, calling for the transfer of technology on concessional and preferential terms to the developing countries. In addition, the lending agencies must make efforts to mitigate the impact of structural adjustment programmes on vulnerable groups, in particular through the provision of social safety nets.

48. Agenda 21 had stated that a specific anti-poverty strategy was a basic precondition for sustainable development. The cost of such a strategy was, however, considerable and the commitment of the international community to the eradication of poverty would, he hoped, be reflected in specific resource commitments.

49. With reference to the field coordination of United Nations activities in poverty eradication, he stressed that coordination should not be used as a pretext to restrict or modify the distinct mandates of each specialized agency and that coordination remained the responsibility of national Governments. India believed that the concepts of United Nations ambassadors and enhanced field-level representation were fraught with pitfalls and should be avoided.

50. Mr. CARMICHAEL (Canada) said that his delegation fully supported the call for a common, system-wide approach to policies and activities for poverty eradication, which should be at the centre of all United Nations development programming. All consultative groups and round tables concerned should examine the appropriateness of policy frameworks, the provision of equal opportunities and educational, financial and capital constraints.

51. In addition, Canada believed that the enhancement of economic and educational opportunities for women was crucial to poverty alleviation and it urged the United Nations development organizations, within their respective mandates, to emulate the exemplary work being done in that area by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

52. While consideration should be given to the comparative advantages of the different agencies in poverty-focused development programmes, a common approach must be fostered throughout the United Nations system, involving close cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and the relevant specialized agencies. In addition, fuller use should be made of the expertise of non-governmental organizations and their participation and influence in poverty alleviation policies should be increased; where necessary, they should have access to United Nations resources to support their own programmes.

53. Finally, he stressed that, while the responsibility for creating a policy environment conducive to poverty alleviation rested with national Governments, the participation of all those concerned, including non-governmental organizations, cooperatives, private sector establishments and the general public, should be encouraged, as poverty alleviation programmes could only gain from broad popular participation.

54. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that his country's "transitional economy" strategy aimed to break the vicious cycle of poverty, by improving the productivity of the poorer sectors in developing countries. In that strategy, food aid was seen not merely as a stop-gap measure in times of emergency, but as a short-term strategy paid for in kind through participation in labour-intensive programmes.

55. The strategy concentrated on the rural sector, particularly in the poorest land-locked developing countries, where it aimed to promote growth through gradual, low-cost programmes in a limited number of areas, namely, agricultural productivity; off-farm rural job creation; rural social services and infrastructure; employment, housing and services in urban slums; and population control. Programmes in those areas endeavoured to synthesize national policies with regional needs while remaining sufficiently flexible to be modified as and when necessary.

56. Israel had used the strategy in attaining its own high-technology economy and self-sufficiency in agriculture and had applied elements of the strategy in numerous international programmes in the developing world. Israel had amassed considerable experience in rural development and agriculture under difficult conditions and was willing to place it at the disposal of other countries.

57. Mr. JOSHI (Nepal) said that, in the new world order, security should not be viewed purely in military terms but as a combination of social, political and economic factors capable of overcoming the dangers of poverty, environmental degradation, terrorism and drug trafficking. A world divided sharply between rich and poor could not be secure and stable. He therefore urged the United Nations system to place poverty eradication high on its agenda, and stressed that it was more vital than ever before to reactivate North-South dialogue on the basis of interdependence and mutuality of interests.

58. Nepal regretted the inadequate response given by industrial countries to the issues of growth and poverty, exemplified by the stalemate in the Uruguay Round and the disappointing level of ODA flows. By redirecting funds from military expenditure and agricultural subsidies, donor countries could significantly increase the resources available to poor countries.

59. He described a range of poverty alleviation initiatives, undertaken by regional bodies such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, placing primary education in the forefront of the struggle against poverty, and at the national level, by his Government, through a series of education, family planning and women's programmes. As both a least developed and land-locked country, Nepal faced massive challenges in all sectors and its efforts needed to be supplemented by an enhanced level of external assistance. Poverty degraded not only those who suffered from it but also those who tolerated it and he urged the United Nations to realize, at last, its goal of promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

60. Mrs. OLSZOWSKI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that since sustainable development was contingent upon success in guaranteeing human development, equality, respect for the natural ecosystems and the strengthening of democratic processes, UNESCO was actively collaborating with member States in their efforts to reduce absolute poverty, particularly through the education sector.

61. UNESCO's actions in that area aimed to develop viable educational strategies, tailored to financial constraints and capable of surviving crises and far-reaching economic and social change; and to make a technical contribution, as a non-funding Member of the United Nations system, to the dialogue between Member States and funding sources. Corresponding projects had been commenced, primarily with UNDP financing, in various African and Asian countries. An inter-agency task force on austerity, adjustment and human resources had been established by UNESCO and ILO and other coordination initiatives on structural adjustment and social problems had been mounted by UNESCO and the specialized agencies and international organizations active in Latin America, with the participation of the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Andean Pact.

(Mrs. Olszowski, UNESCO)

62. Information, education and communication programmes, such as those promoted through the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, adopted at Jomtien in March 1990, had an essential role to play in combating poverty and achieving sustainable development. Since both structural adjustment policies and social and population policies were currently being hampered by low educational levels in the populations concerned, allocations to education should not be reduced for any reason. In addition, the communication capacities of the developing countries must be strengthened in the fight against poverty and, to that end, UNESCO was collaborating with UNFPA in more than 100 population education and communication projects, as well as implementing university-based programmes to strengthen the capacities of the least developed countries and to close the gap in scientific and technological knowledge between developed and developing countries.

63. In the absence of a system-wide mechanism for the coordination of poverty alleviation activities, there was a great need to strengthen the mechanisms for inter-agency coordination in that area. In particular, UNESCO strongly believed that the proposed 1995 world summit for social development should serve to strengthen the Organization's role in combating poverty.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
39th meeting
held on
Friday, 13 November 1992
at 11 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 39th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GUERRERO (Philippines)
(Vice-Chairman)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.39
7 December 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

92-57752 6437S (E)

In the absence of Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay), Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 81: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued) A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/88-S/23563, A/47/225, A/47/312-S/24238, A/47/391, A/47/437, A/47/441, A/47/449-S/24566, A/47/499, A/47/530, A/47/564; E/1992/47)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. LAWSON (Togo) said that his delegation acknowledged the considerable progress made in several areas - life expectancy, literacy and mortality rates, access to health services and clean water - but was outraged by the continued spread of the poverty currently affecting more than 1.1 billion people, especially in Asia and Africa. According to the latest report of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the situation of children in the world, the number of families which could not meet their basic needs had doubled in 10 years and drought was again threatening 27 million people in 14 countries; and the number of children suffering from malnutrition had increased since 1980. Sub-Saharan Africa had been hit particularly hard: the report of the eighteenth session of the World Food Council (WFC) indicated that 20 countries were experiencing serious food crises and that the threat to them of famine and epidemics was probably more serious than during the recent disaster years.

2. Notwithstanding the goals of the latest International Development Strategy, programmes and policies for the eradication of poverty still suffered from a hostile economic environment. The gap between rich and poor countries was growing ever wider, whether it was a question of incomes, growth levels, access to markets, or human capital.

3. With regard to official development assistance (ODA), the targets which the international community had set itself were far from being attained; in fact ODA represented only 0.35 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) of the industrialized countries (instead of 0.7 per cent), i.e. $54 billion a year, whereas that amount would have to be virtually quadrupled in order to increase the average growth rate of the developing countries by 2 per cent; the distribution of ODA also left much to be desired, for only a quarter was allocated to the countries in which three quarters of the world's poor lived, and it was used mainly to meet basic needs: only 6.5 per cent of bilateral assistance was allocated to programmes of elementary education, primary health care, drinking water supply, family planning and nutrition.

4. The economic growth of the developing countries, which was an essential condition for the eradication of poverty, was impeded by various external factors such as the sharp decline in commodity prices and the protectionism in the industrialized countries. It must be stressed in that regard that the

(Mr. Lawson, Togo)

stalemate in the Uruguay negotiations was having adverse effects on the food security and the economies of the developing countries; the social costs of structural adjustment programmes and the crushing burden of foreign debt, which had risen from $100 billion in 1970 to $1,350 billion in 1990 were also major obstacles to the poverty-eradication campaign.

5. The efforts made at the national and international levels had so far proved vain, as the General Assembly had noted in resolution 46/141, but the new drive for solidarity resulting from the Rio Conference on Environment and Development and the Cartagena Commitment were generating hopes of an intensification of the fight against poverty. To that end, development assistance must be redirected, mainly towards the poorest countries and satisfaction of basic needs, making it more predictable, increasing the proportion of multilateral aid, and establishing a timetable for achievement of the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. Action plans must also be drawn up at the forthcoming International Conference on Nutrition with a view to achieving the nutritional targets set by the World Summit for Children and providing the developing countries with assistance to bring about a new green revolution which would lead to food security and self-sufficiency. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must be more closely involved in the planning and implementation of poverty-eradication programmes. Inspiration must be drawn from the example of UNICEF, whose anti-AIDS programmes enjoyed the support of various NGOs. Remission of some two thirds of the debt must also be envisaged, as had been proposed in September 1991 by the Conference of Commonwealth Finance Ministers. The UNICEF initiative for debt relief for the benefit of children ought to be encouraged and extended to programmes of family planning, primary health care, drinking water supply and literacy. On the conclusion of the Uruguay negotiations measures should be taken to liberalize international trade and open up markets to the goods produced by the developing countries.

6. His delegation thought that a machinery for dealing with all aspects of the issue of poverty should be established within the United Nations system and it hoped that a high-level inter-agency meeting would be convened in order to establish a common methodology for a harmonzied system of social indicators. It also hoped that the forthcoming international meetings on economic and social matters would be used to advantage for the establishment of action plans for the eradication of poverty.

7. It welcomed the preparation of an international convention on desertification pursuant to the Agenda 21 programme and the creation by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation of an independent committee with a brief to fight poverty; that initiative might usefully serve as an example to other regions.

8. Archbishop MARTINO (Permanent Observer for the Holy See) said that it was good that the eradication of poverty and the satisfaction of peoples' basic needs were now the focus of development activities. This new humanitarian attitude, far from reducing the importance of scientific and technological

(Archbishop Martino, Permanent Observer, Holy See)

progress, was a guarantee of its validity. The disparity between rich and poor and the prevalence of poverty in a world so rich in scientific and material resources was an affront to human dignity and a challenge to the conscience of mankind. The international community could not tolerate a situation in which millions of human beings lived in poverty or even died through lack of the essential necessities to which every human being had a right. It must therefore be mobilized to provide immediate relief for the suffering of the poorest people and commit itself to encouraging the social, economic and political reforms which were essential to the genuine development of all nations; as Pope Paul VI had said, development was the new name for peace.

9. The Church had always regarded service to the poor and needy as one of its essential tasks. It had inspired and sustained innumerable institutions and organizations which were the precursors of today's social assistance programmes. In the spirit of its Founder, who had chosen to identify himself with the needy, the thirsty, the hungry, the homeless and the oppressed, the Church continued to preach love for the poor, for it was convinced that assistance could be effective only if it was furnished in a spirit of respect for individual dignity and of the solidarity and responsibility by means of which all could have access to the world's resources, while still caring for the environment, and live in peace and security.

10. The spiritual impoverishment of society, the denial of human rights, and practices which injured human dignity or which denied access to the spiritual and the transcendent were all forms of deprivation just as serious as material poverty. The struggle against poverty would be complete only when all persons were able to fulfil their human, cultural, spiritual and religious aspirations. The Second Committee correctly placed the issue of poverty in the wider context of international cooperation, since, while much of the task of eliminating poverty must take place at the local level, only solidarity, especially solidarity between developing and industrialized countries, would overcome poverty, as stressed by Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the 1990 World Peace Day. Such solidarity was a moral imperative to which the realities of international economic relations - protectionism, technological monopolies, excessive debt burden - continued to run counter. At the same time the leaders of the developing countries had a responsibility to eliminate factors that weakened the confidence of potential investors and to allow their own citizens to participate in the development of a just economic order.

11. The struggle against poverty and the affirmation of human dignity were at the heart of almost every item before the Committee. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had recently reaffirmed the inseparable link between the fundamental right to development and the rights and duties that governed the use of resources and the protection of the environment. The documents adopted at the Rio Conference - the two Conventions, the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the consensus on the conservation of forests - must be consolidated and developed. The forthcoming

(Archbishop Martino, Permanent Observer, Holy See)

conferences on human rights, on population and development and on women would touch on vital aspects of the dignity of the human person and would contribute to a lessening of the inhuman suffering caused by deprivation and poverty. He welcomed the proposal to organize a world summit for social development in 1995, as proposed at the Security Council Summit in January 1992. That initiative would provide an opportunity to go beyond the purely economic impact of poverty and to base development on human resources. As the Holy See had affirmed at UNCED, in the consideration of every issue, however technical, due account must be taken of the ethical dimension and respect for human dignity.

12. Suffering was not an abstract concept, just another variable in a complex process. The poor must not be seen as the causes rather than the victims of their misfortunes. The goods of the Earth had been destined by God for the benefit of all, and development could be achieved only by guaranteeing a share for all and by not excluding any.

13. The eradication of poverty meant the extirpation of the roots of poverty. That implied reform of all the institutionalized forms of injustice, described by Pope John Paul II as "structures of sin". The international community must not only listen to the cry of the poor and lend its voice to it, but respond to their pleading with generous solidarity.

14. Mr. AROSEMENA (Panama), speaking on behalf of the countries of Central America, said that there had been an alarming increase in poverty during the 1980s, particularly in the developing countries, and that its eradication must be the principal objective of development strategies in the years ahead.

15. It was for those countries above all to make concerted and sustained efforts on the domestic front to attain economic growth accompanied by social justice. The Governments of the Central American countries had received a mandate to strengthen democratic structures, promote respect for human rights and improve the well-being of their peoples. In the economic sphere, they had opened up their markets to the influence of supply and demand and stabilized their budgetary and monetary policies while seeking to liberalize trade. But such reforms were having a major impact on their peoples, particularly the poorer sectors. For that reason, in response to increasing social unrest and political concerns, the Central American countries were, during the 1990s, seeking to implement economic reforms accompanied by programmes to promote social justice, so that growth would be equitably distributed among different categories.

16. More than 60 per cent of the population of the region lived in poverty. Short-term and medium-term social programmes were thus essential in ending illiteracy, malnutrition and rapid population growth and in reducing high infant mortality rates.

17. The deterioration in the social situation was reflected in high

(Mr. Arosemena, Panama)

unemployment rates, particularly among the young, the resurgence of delinquency in major cities, the deterioration in health conditions and increase in the number of displaced persons, as well as being reflected in accelerated and uncontrolled urbanization and in environmental degradation. That was why Governments were seeking to incorporate the people in the process of economic and social development through the creation of productive jobs, an increase in funding for the social sector and community organization.

18. The countries of Central America reiterated their support for the peace process, economic adjustment and poverty mitigation. The economic and political reforms that they were implementing required a favourable international climate: settlement of the debt crisis, an end to protectionist measures that restricted international trade, and an increase in foreign investment and financial resources on concessional terms. The resources set free by such measures would make it possible to combat poverty.

19. It was regrettable that the developed world did not support the efforts of the developing countries more energetically. Witness the stagnation in the Uruguay Round and the strengthening of protectionist measures against commodities, as well as the inadequacy of financial assistance, the developed countries not having kept their commitment to devote 0.7 per cent of GNP to official development assistance.

20. Mr. AHMIA (Algeria) said that despite scientific and technological progress more than a billion people continued to live in absolute poverty, more than 24 million children died every year, more than 1 1/2 billion people had no access to medicines, 900 million adults were illiterate, more than a billion people lived in substandard housing and a fifth of the population of the South suffered from hunger. In such circumstances, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade had rightly made an urgent and priority objective of poverty eradication, which also occupied a central place in the United Nations new agenda for the development of Africa in the 1990s.

21. Increasingly, the developing countries were adopting economic reforms, sometimes at the cost of their internal stability, with a view to reorienting economic policy and achieving a more efficient utilization of resources. However, despite enormous efforts and sacrifices made at high social cost, the situation was still disturbing, not to say alarming, in many areas of the world. That was particularly so in Africa, an especially hard-hit continent, which included three quarters of the poorest countries and in which the socio-economic situation continued to decline. Africa's economy was collapsing, with all the resultant social consequences: malnutrition, famine, disease and epidemics, notably acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), which were wiping out ever greater numbers of people. Natural disasters exacerbated those appalling conditions.

22. Nothing realistic or effective had been done by the international community to stop those dreadful forces. The commitments so readily

(Mr. Ahmia, Algeria)

undertaken had not even begun to be implemented, a fact which had contributed to the failure of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. It was to be hoped that the international community, aware of the inexorable deterioration of the situation in Africa, would actively demonstrate solidarity on behalf of a continent in distress, in particular by implementing the United Nations new agenda for the development of Africa in the 1990s, adopted at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

23. As the South Commission had observed, the poor, who in many developing countries consituted the majority of the population, would not continue meekly to accept the idea that they must resign themselves to their suffering and deprivation indefinitely. When the lifestyle of one part of the population of a poor country was incompatible with that country's level of development and resources, the disparity could generate serious political and economic tension, thereby destroying the consensus necessary for the application of coherent and effective development policies.

24. The implementation of structural adjustment programmes had not made it possible to reduce the gap which still separated the various strata of society. The situation of the poorest continued to deteriorate in several countries. Those programmes had not produced the desired results, and meeting needs for food, education, health, drinking water, hygiene and sanitation remained one of the most legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the South. It was essential that such programmes should take the human dimension of development into account in the social sector, particularly the needs of the most vulnerable groups in society. A social safety net must be put in place. The United Nations should concentrate its efforts on eradicating poverty, while the developed countries should take the necessary steps to rectify their macroeconomic policies and lift the trade barriers which were hindering developing country exports. The developed countries must help to improve prospects for development by means of more and better financial assistance. To be fully effective, any action aimed at eradicating poverty had to be undertaken within the context of a global and coherent strategy involving the United Nations system in its entirety. Multilateral cooperation was needed more than ever. However, it was necessary to move beyond the initial planning and study stage in order to transform that cooperation into concrete action plans and genuinely operational assistance plans.

25. Mrs. SANTANA (Venezuela) said that the new international situation and the new concept of development based on an international partnership highlighted the need to strike a balance between social equality and ecologically sound economic growth. In that context, it was essential that the international community should give priority to social problems, notably the fight against poverty, because deteriorating living conditions constituted a threat to international peace and security.

26. For that reason, the problem of poverty must be tackled in an integrated fashion, within a framework of coordinated strategies. Agenda 21 had clearly

(Mrs. Santana, Venezuela)

stressed the principle of international partnership, stating that if the problem was to be resolved, country-specific poverty-eradication programmes must be set up and national activities must be supported by international efforts even as a favourable international environment was created.

27. Venezuela had always considered that the implementation of structural adjustment measures and the sound management of social development programmes, requiring a more equitable distribution of national wealth, were a prerequisite to satisfying the population's basic needs. Within that context, Venezuela reaffirmed its support for the concept of sustainable development, taking the view that there was a direct relationship between poverty and environmental deterioration.

28. In practice, Venezuela had always devoted significant amounts of money to its social development programmes, which during the 1970s had accounted for approximately 40 per cent of public expenditure and from 10 per cent to 14 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Venezuela had continued its efforts during the 1980s, despite the crisis-induced pressure on social and general expenditure in the region, and would continue to endeavour to make efficient use of the resources at its disposal to eliminate poverty and meet the needs of the most disadvantaged groups in the areas of health, food and education.

29. Yet the solution of the problem of poverty was not dependent solely on sound management and equitable distribution of national resources, which in most cases were in themselves insufficient. Increased cooperation on the part of the developed countries was essential if there was to be a fundamental change in the existing economic system, characterized as it was by falling raw-material prices, constantly rising interest rates, the strengthening of protectionist barriers and the heavy external debt burden.

30. On the latter point, for example, Venezuela's debt repayments for 1993 would account for approximately 24 per cent of its entire resources, an alarming figure which jeopardized the implementation of programmes to reduce the social impact of structural reforms. It was necessary, therefore, to approach the problem of external debt from a different perspective, taking into account the need for a real resumption of economic growth and social development in the poorest countries. To that end, financial flows to the developing countries must be increased, as must multilateral credits, direct foreign investment and resources allocated on concessional terms.

31. An international trading system that was more open, freer, balanced and disciplined must also be established; to that end, it was essential that the Uruguay Round should be concluded rapidly.

32. In conclusion, her delegation was pleased that the question of poverty had been included in the agenda of the recent substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, reflecting as it did the concern of Member States to enhance the coordination of the efforts by various United Nations bodies to eradicate poverty.

33. Mr. KIM (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) pointed out that poverty in the developing countries was the main factor responsible for environmental degradation and one of the greatest obstacles to sustainable development. The principal reason for that phenomenon was the unfavourable international economic environment, which had continued to weaken the economic situation of the developing countries during the 1980s. There could be no lasting peace in the world as long as the majority of the world's population lived in abject poverty and underdevelopment. Persistent global recession, the widening gap between developed and developing countries, growing protectionism, massive debt, negative transfer of resources and the gradual erosion of the trading system continued to cloud the prospect of eradicating poverty.

34. It was necessary to address the underlying problems producing that phenomenon. Although primary responsibility remained with the developing countries, the developed countries also had a responsibility which they should not shirk, namely, to show solidarity in the fight against poverty by creating a favourable international economic environment. Sufficient resources should be made available for that common undertaking. Commitments made by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should be fulfilled. It was also necessary to reach official development assistance targets and ensure the transfer of resources through direct foreign investments and debt relief. His delegation supported the proposal to convene an international conference on development financing to address the global poverty problem.

35. International actions aimed at eliminating poverty should take into account the specific conditions of each country. Priority should be given to poverty reduction, technology transfer and institutional capacity-building of the developing countries. To improve the effectiveness of assistance, there was a need for enhanced coordination in the design and implementation of programmes between the organizations of the United Nations system and the Governments concerned. Institutional reforms at the United Nations should be complemented by practical steps to alleviate poverty. It was particularly important that human settlements be improved and that Governments provide guarantees to create the necessary conditions to that end. Improvement of the role of women in economic activity and in the decision-making process for development was also essential.

36. Mrs. ULLOA (Ecuador) underlined the paradox whereby international cooperation and assistance had not succeeded in changing the world situation and, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, poverty was spreading in spite of technological and scientific advancements. Thus, the conclusion to be drawn was that the cooperation and assistance provided had been insufficient. In a world where the disparity between rich and poor was growing, the fight against impoverishment was a duty of the international community.

37. The term "poverty" implied a number of deficiencies: social, economic, political and cultural; those resulted, however, from one basic deficiency: the lack of access, because of poor nutrition, to health and education. In the developing countries, poor people did not have access to a decent education or to a proper diet; that had in turn led to inequality in

(Mrs. Ulloa, Ecuador)

development and to poverty. The Governments of those countries needed to feed and educate their populations as a priority goal.

38. The situation was worsening for the developing countries owing to the unfavourable international economic environment. In spite of their efforts to attain economic stability, it was difficult for those countries to implement development plans, given inequitable terms of trade, the stagnation of resource transfers and the increasing foreign debt.

39. The international community had a duty to combat poverty, primarily from a moral standpoint, for the human conscience could not tolerate the existence of 1.5 billion poor people; from a demographic standpoint, since population growth remained one of the main causes of persistent poverty; from an ecological standpoint, as poverty was known to be a source of environmental destruction; and, finally, from a political standpoint, as poverty was a threat to national and international stability.

40. It was vital for a global political will, taking advantage of peace dividends and current opportunities for economic cooperation, to endeavour to build a better world for future generations, in which the interdependence of nations and solidarity of peoples would not be vain words.

41. Mr. SY (Executive Secretary of the Organization of African Unity) said that poverty was one of the greatest enemies of mankind and that, in the past 30 years, major efforts had been undertaken by the world community, Governments and non-governmental organizations to eradicate poverty, but that those efforts had generally been subsumed under aspects of North-South economic cooperation: foreign aid, technical assistance and relief programmes. The last decade, however, had been one of unprecedented increased poverty in the developing countries, especially in Africa. That suggested that greater attention should be directed to the root causes of poverty. In Africa, poverty had enormously compounded the problems of underdevelopment. The standard of living had fallen precipitously. The average earnings of individuals in the urban areas had been reduced to subsistence level. The middle class in Africa had become extinct in the wake of rigorous application of structural adjustment programmes. The lower classes had sunk deeper into deprivation. Despite migration to urban areas, a substantial part of the population continued to live in the rural areas. Agriculture remained the principal economic activity, but farmers had been impoverished as a result of the decline in prices of their export commodities. The demand for those commodities had been generally sluggish, while at the same time the output of several cash crops had been adversely affected by drought, especially in the Sahelian region. The inevitable result had been a massive reduction in agricultural workers' incomes. On the whole, income had fallen by over 40 per cent in Africa since the beginning of the 1980s. In addition, in Somalia and the Sudan, for example, internal conflicts had led to large refugee problems and precipitated a horrifying famine of vast proportions.

(Mr. Sy)

42. Given the general impoverishment of Africa and certain countries in Asia and Latin America, there was a need to find permanent solutions to the fundamental causes of that phenomenon, especially as the global economic system was inescapably interdependent. Unabated poverty in the developing countries would, in the long run, have far-reaching adverse consequences for the developed countries, leading not only to fewer markets for their industrial products in developing countries but also to a waste of financial resources when those were used to cope with conflicts which poverty intrinsically engendered.

43. As poverty tightened its grip on Africa, the international community must facilitate the conclusion of agreements on realistic world commodity prices. Higher prices on world markets would raise the income of farmers and enhance the capacity of many African countries to provide much-needed infrastructure such as schools and hospitals. Increased national earnings from higher prices, increased output and demand would enable African countries to import more capital goods for development purposes.

44. In order to cope with the fundamental problem of production, international cooperation must be strengthened in order to increase capital inflow. The structural adjustment programmes to which many African countries were committed required substantial amounts of capital. Also, the debt burden would need to be reduced through more debt write-offs and the inflow of new capital; the latter was vital in order to revive the moribund industrial and agricultural sectors. Under the structural adjustment programmes, African countries were highly receptive to foreign private investments. The conditions offered to foreign investors were very attractive. The new investment codes in many countries were very generous and the establishment of democratic political systems would bring stability to the political systems.

45. In 1991, Africa had established the African Economic Community (AEC); its aims included the promotion of rapid industrial and agricultural development and the expansion of trade and scientific cooperation in partial fulfilment of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos. UNDP had provided valuable assistance in that endeavour. However, the full operationalization of the Community would hinge in large measure on the support of the international community as well as of the African countries themselves. At the international level, financial support would be required for the Community's industrial and agricultural projects. The Community would also need financial assistance in order to build the infrastructure needed to link African States, otherwise integration would remain an empty dream. OAU therefore urged the international community to provide adequate financial support for the African Economic Community. The Community represented the basic instrument for self-sustained economic growth and development which were the surest means of eradicating poverty in Africa.

46. High priority must be accorded to the issues of desertification, drought and famine. Desertification was a result of human activities; given adequate technical resources it could therefore be arrested. Drought, on the other

(Mr. Sy)

hand, was a natural phenomenon; if extreme, it led to famine. Individual African countries seldom had the wherewithal to deal effectively with those problems. OAU therefore would welcome the speedy negotiation of a convention on desertification and drought. It also hoped that substantial financial support would be accorded to United Nations agencies in order to implement the provisions of the future convention.

47. The rising poverty in the developing countries, especially in Africa, posed a major challenge to the new world order. The new world order should be free of conflict, encourage enduring political interaction, promote world trade and capital movements and fuel world economic growth. However, those objectives might prove difficult to achieve if a substantial portion of the world's population continued to suffer from chronic penury. All countries were inextricably linked to the world economic system; the latter exerted a strong influence on the pace of their economic growth and development but remained beyond their control. In other words, nothing short of equitable global trade and an adequate flow of financial resources and technical assistance to the developing countries, particularly those in Africa, would bring about a genuine eradication of poverty.

48. Mr. WEIBGEN (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that, since time was short, he would merely give a summary of his statement, which began with a review of the incidence, nature and scope of rural poverty and mentioned a number of complementary policies that Governments must take to alleviate poverty. FAO devoted special attention to the situation of countries that were engaged in processes of structural adjustment and to those which were in transition to a market economy; those countries needed external support. Since the 1979 World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, FAO had intensified its efforts to assist member Governments meet the objectives of poverty alleviation. Specifically, it had organized inter-agency policy missions to 21 countries in order to help in the formulation of national policies and programmes, and about 20 regional inter-agency consultations on agrarian reform and rural development; it had also facilitated intergovernmental consultations on poverty-related subjects at the regional level and carried out 19 country case-studies on the causes and incidence of rural poverty and means for its alleviation. Recent FAO conferences had adopted two main plans of action, the Plan of Action on Women in Agricultural Development and the Plan of Action on People's Participation in Rural Development.

49. FAO attached great importance to cooperation among Governments, donors, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations in the efforts to alleviate world poverty; it organized meetings of the Task Force on rural development of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to facilitate the cooperation of United Nations agencies in the area of rural poverty alleviation. Such initiatives would contribute to the close inter-agency cooperation and coordination that Member States, in particular the Group of 77 and the European Community, earnestly desired.

50. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that poverty remained a major concern and one of the most serious threats to the future of mankind. It was a universal problem. The number of people living in poverty was estimated at more than 1 billion world wide, of whom 600 million were considered to be extremely poor.

51. Although the Secretary-General noted in his report (E/1992/47) that the structural adjustment programmes being carried out in a number of developing countries were accelerating growth, he nevertheless recognized that their implementation was having an extremely adverse impact on the vulnerable groups. Many other international organizations, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNICEF, FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) had published studies citing the high social cost of such programmes; such intellectual honesty would seem to indicate a genuine determination to alleviate the adverse consequences of such adjustments.

52. Some consequences were worth singling out in order to stress the seriousness of the situation, especially in light of the fact that human beings were supposed to be at the centre of all development policies. In order to implement their structural adjustment programmes, developing countries were having to make sharp cuts in resources for the social sector. Given the importance of the social sector for the most disadvantaged, it followed that unless structural adjustment schemes were accompanied by vigorous measures to improve the social situation, they might upset the political stability of the countries concerned.

53. A new type of poverty was evident in many African countries. Indeed, a new category of unemployed was emerging comprising workers who had been laid off from State or para-Statal enterprises which had been liquidated or privatized; they were becoming a destitute underclass. Similarly, many young graduates often from very low-income families could not find jobs because of the vast number of civil servants and the smallness of the labour market in the private sector.

54. In his report, the Secretary-General had rightly given special importance to the problem of eradicating poverty and had examined in detail the question of coordinating the activities of United Nations bodies in that field. The Economic and Social Council, at its substantive 1992 session, had recommended the preparation of an overall system-wide framework for the coordination of those activities. In his opinion, the United Nations system should work out national and international global and integrated approaches and strategies for the eradication of poverty capable of stimulating independent initiatives for rural and urban development; establish links between the goals of eradicating poverty and the optimization of human resources; promote the concept of coherence in the coordination of national plans and policies, multilateral and bilateral aid programmes and the activities of regional bodies and non-governmental organizations seeking to eradicate poverty, and prepare sectoral and intersectoral strategies for combating poverty.

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55. His delegation welcomed the important place given the problem of eradicating poverty in the proceedings of the Rio de Janeiro Conference on Environment and Development and reaffirmed its total support of Section I, chapter 3, of the Agenda 21 programme.

56. All countries should establish specific anti-poverty programmes which should be supported by the international community. In that connection, it was to be hoped that the end of the cold war would make it possible to free substantial resources which could be allocated to that purpose. The United Nations should work out a strategy aimed specifically at combating poverty in order to ensure lasting development.

57. The long-term goal advocated by Agenda 21 for the sustainable management of resources and the eradication of poverty was intended to enable populations to enjoy sustainable livelihoods. Policies based on human development should therefore be applied and integrated programmes worked out for all the disadvantaged regions aiming at the reduction of poverty by the creation of jobs and income.

58. Governments should be encouraged to increase their investments in their human capital through programmes intended for the poor rural and urban zones and all vulnerable groups of society. The achievement of lasting development and, consequently, the eradication of poverty, required broad public participation not only in development activities but also in the decision-making process. Women had an important part to play in that field and should be given the full consideration they were entitled to.

59. His delegation reaffirmed its support of the World Summit Plan of Action for Children and of UNICEF's remarkable three-pronged anti-poverty strategy usually called the three-A Approach (appraisal, analysis and action). It was glad that, in its fifth programme cycle, UNDP had made poverty one of its six priorities. UNDP's approach, which was based on the strengthening of national development capacities, was highly responsible as it was aimed at achieving human development, i.e., the creation of income and jobs, greater access to health care, and education and housing for the most disadvantaged groups.

60. His delegation applauded FAO's programme of permanently monitoring the availability of food supplies in the developing countries and its adoption of programmes intended to diminish poverty by stimulating production and growth in the agricultural sector. It also welcomed the action taken by WHO to promote access by the poor to primary health care within the framework of its "Health for all by the year 2000" campaign.

61. Regional conflicts and hotbeds of tension within countries, as well as the extreme poverty resulting from drought and desertification, were forcing numerous populations into internal migration or migration to other countries, aggravating still further the precariousness of their conditions of life. UNHCR was carrying out a difficult task admirably, and was seeking, in spite of its limited means, to meet the fundamental needs of those refugees or

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displaced persons. It was to be hoped that the international community would mobilize to increase the funds made available to it.

62. It was essential to work out a rational policy of international cooperation for the eradication of poverty. Various important documents had been adopted for that purpose within the framework of international meetings, including the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, the Declaration issued at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the various documents adopted at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, which should be implemented quickly.

63. It was encouraging to note that the heads of all the United Nations bodies now recognized the overriding need for a large-scale research effort to eliminate poverty; the usefulness of the strategies intended to increase the capacity of poor populations to attain a decent level of life; the importance of the problem of hunger; the need to work out plans of action to integrate women into development, and the urgent need to work out measures to protect the most vulnerable groups. It was to be hoped that the many statements made to that effect would not remain dead letters, as it was essential to break the vicious circle of poverty so that every human being could lead an acceptable life. That was the challenge the international community must take up.

64. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 81.

Organization of work (A/C.2/47/L.1 and A/C.2/47/L.1 and Add.1)

65. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN said that the Afghan delegation had asked the President of the General Assembly to consider transferring consideration of the agenda item entitled "Emergency international assistance for the reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan" to the plenary. He therefore proposed to postpone consideration of the question until the Assembly had taken a decision on the matter.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.